The UNESCO COURIER

APRIL 1994

MODERN MANAGEMENT AND LOCAL TRADITIONS

✓
Interview with Jean Malaurie

✓
The National Park dilemma

✓
A paradise garden in the Seychelles

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E N C O U N T E R S

We invite readers to send us photographs to be considered for publication in this feature. Your photo should show a painting, a sculpture, piece of architecture or any other subject which seems to be an example of cross-fertilization between cultures. Alternatively, you could send us pictures of two works from different cultural backgrounds in which you see some striking connection or resemblance. Please add a short caption to all photographs.

Watercolour XXII (1989)
(62 x 45 cm)
by Mona Yazbeck

"Sometimes light patches of mist, rising from the mountainsides in the morning breeze, broke loose like white feathers that a bird might have released in the wind," wrote the French poet Alphonse de Lamartine on 2 September 1832, during a visit to Lebanon. The Lebanese artist Mona Yazbeck has chosen the transparent fluidity of watercolour to paint impressions of her country inspired by the travel writings of visitors to the Orient, a fashionable literary genre in nineteenth-century Europe. She has rediscovered intact the face of a war-torn land, just as it might have appeared to those who looked on it with wonderment for the first time.

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The UNESCO COURIER

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"The Governments of the States parties to this Constitution on behalf of their peoples declare,
"that since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed ...
"that a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.
"For these reasons, the States parties ... are agreed and determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives...."
EXTRACT FROM THE PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION OF UNESCO, LONDON, 16 NOVEMBER 1945

JEAN MALAURIE

talks to Bahgat Elnadi and Adel Rifaat

■ The Arctic, from stones to man

In 1948, twenty-six-year-old Jean Malaurie embarked on his first polar expedition, to the west coast of Greenland. Two years later he spent a winter with the Inuit, learning their language and hunting techniques and sharing their everyday experiences. On his return to France, he initiated with the Paris publishing house of Plon a series entitled "Terre humaine" with the publication of *Les derniers rois de Thulé (The Last Kings of Thule*, Jonathan Cape, 1983), his account of his experiences among the Inuit, which has since been translated into twenty-two languages. He holds the only chair in France in polar geography (at EHESS, the *Ecole des Hautes études en sciences sociales*) and was the founder, with the historian Fernand Braudel, of EHESS's Centre of Arctic Studies. As well as pursuing an academic career, he has continued to carry out research in the field—over thirty one-man expeditions have taken him from Greenland to Alaska and northeast Siberia. Specialists from all over the world contributed to a work published in his honour in 1990: *Pour Jean Malaurie, 102 témoignages en hommage à quarante ans d'études arctiques* (Plon publishers, Paris).

■ *Not the least of your many claims to fame is to have initiated an important series of ethnographic publications, "Terre humaine".*

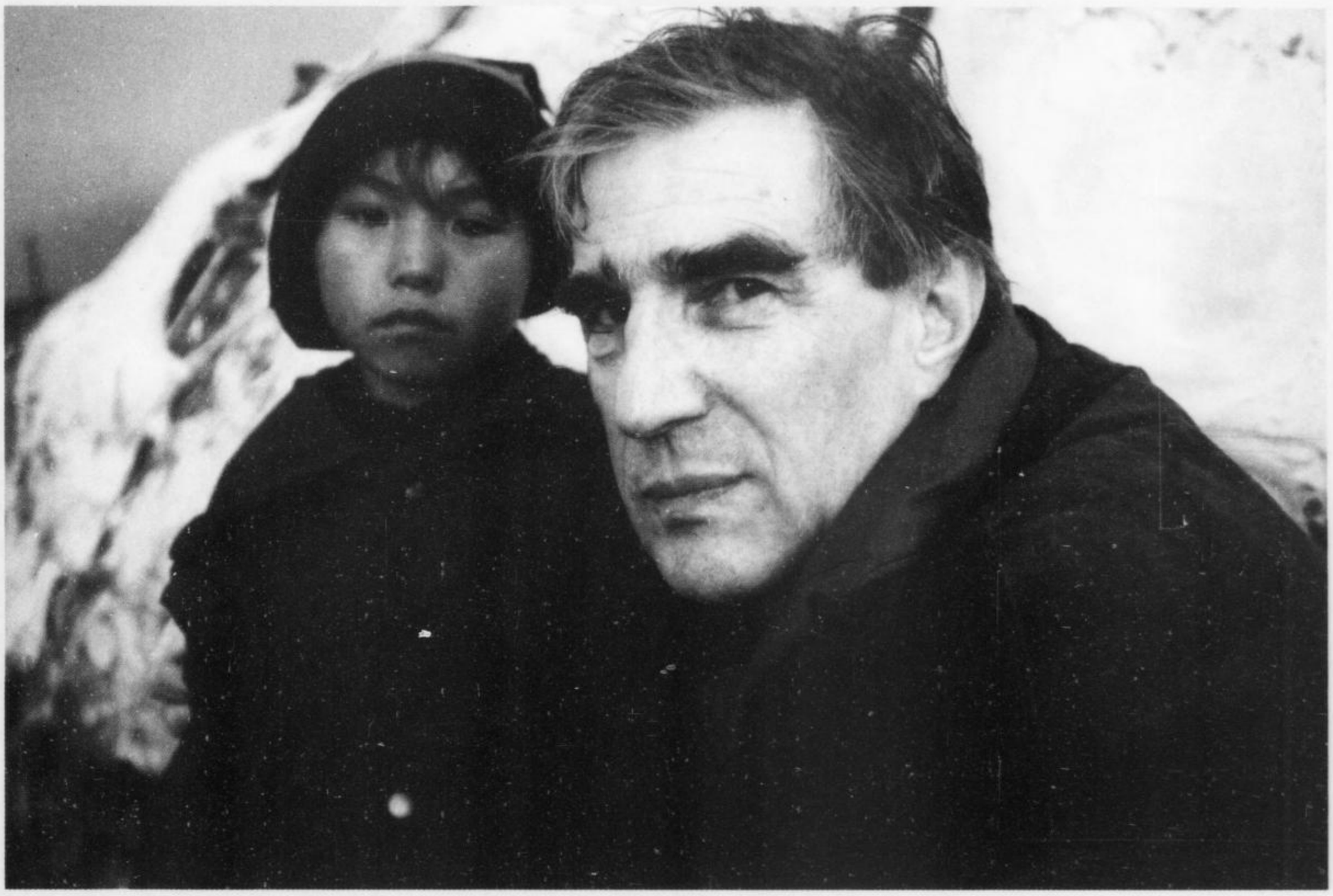
—"Terre humaine" is the embodiment of a current of ideas, a growing awareness of "transdisciplinarity", the overstepping of the boundaries of academic disciplines. Like the *UNESCO Courier*, it is devoted to the idea of getting to know one another. Under the influence of Marxism, interest has in our times focused on systems, tending to leave individuals out of the picture. Structures and economic and social forces do, of course, exist, but there is also an unpredictable player on the stage of history—the human being. That was why I thought it essential to create a current of ideas that would reintroduce the personal element and put into perspective what we academics call anthropology, sociology or ethnology—the observation of other people, in short.

Its other concern is to let people speak for themselves. In the West, who writes? The writer. But tape recorders now enable us to take down the remarks of people who have never held a book in their hands. My aim in this collection, which began in 1955 with my own book *Les derniers rois de Thulé* (*The Last Kings of Thule*) and now comprises over seventy volumes, was to abolish the class struggle—one far more insidious than that denounced by Karl Marx—between intellectuals on the one hand and the meek and lowly on the other. I have on occasion recorded the words of convicts, even of some awaiting execution on death row in one of the toughest jails in Texas. In another book, to be published shortly, an Indian woman, a pariah from southern Madras, tells her life story. What these men and women have to say is irreplaceable.

"Terre humaine" also serves as a reminder that the social sciences are not alone in studying humanity, and that the Bible, the Qur'an, the Vedas and the great works of literature throw a necessary light on our societies' problems. I have therefore sought out unpublished material by great authors. Who would have thought anything remained unpublished of the works of Zola, one of the world's most translated authors? And yet 800 pages of notes, tied together with string, had been lying around for eighty-three years in France's *Bibliothèque nationale* until I published them under the title *Carnets d'enquêtes en France, une ethnographie inédite.* This document is a real lesson in modern journalism, written in the manner of Truman Capote, a style that was new for its time. I also published *Les Immémoriaux* by Victor Segalen, which was gathering dust in the Plon publishing house. Written by a Breton Catholic, it is a remarkably outspoken piece of work, describing the effects of the introduction of Christianity in a traditional society, that of Tahiti, which lost its balance and its *joie de vivre* as a result, and discussing the whole question of this interference in other peoples' lives, with the backing of the colonial power, from the right to conquer their territory to the right to subjugate their souls. The notebooks of a great unknown writer, comparable in stature to Gide, André Suarès, are to be published soon. I am currently negotiating with UNESCO for some of these books, which have a universal appeal, to be made more widely available, in languages other than French or English, less widely used languages.

■ *Your understanding of traditional societies has had considerable influence on your criticisms of industrial society.*

—We are going through a terrible crisis, with unemployment increasing daily not only in western Europe but in Japan and America too. The jobless are the outcasts of



industrial society, and the crisis can only get worse as more and more jobs are automated. We are condemned to live in a society where human beings are at the centre of the crisis. In "economism", the human being is a nuisance. This is the height of absurdity! We need only look at the case of the many young people who go on living with their parents beyond the age of thirty because they are unemployed. With no work to go to, glued to the television or absorbed in video games, their lives become an extension of adolescence, and they may well reach early retirement age without ever having held down a proper job, so their outlook remains that of adolescents—a situation unprecedented in history.

In spite of that, we go on advocating development. Every international conference discusses development. Some of the "developing countries" will never know what it is. What is more, by showing them, in the television series we export to them, affluent families enjoying a comfortable lifestyle they cannot aspire to, by dangling before them a future they will never reach, we are helping to upset their balance. We shall have destroyed them completely before they can straighten themselves up. These are unwholesome practices that are undermining an age-old balance for the sole purpose of finding outlets for the products we manufacture.

■ ***The concept of loss of balance seems to play an important role in your thinking.***

—Balance is essential in nature. For fifteen years I studied balance in stones, stones that have been there since the very beginning of all things—700 million years in the case of the Archaean platform in the Arctic. Under the influence of my first intellectual mentor, Emmanuel de Martonne, one of the founding fathers of modern geography, I came to be interested in weathering processes. I began by studying scree, the rock fragments that accumulate at the foot of cliffs, and the geodynamics of its formation in the great cold and hot deserts, with their extremes of temperature. As my research progressed, I turned my attention to the stones themselves and the labyrinths, grooves and cavities that form in them. There is a special dialectic at work here that gives each stone an identity of its own. Like ourselves, stones have a "passport" to the future. Theirs is the result of a compromise between their mechanical resistance—sandstone, limestone and granite each have their own—and the destructive forces of frost, humidity and geochemical agents. As in human societies, there are various forms of compromise: for a particular stone to last for millions of years it protects itself by compromising as to its shape—triangular or oblong—or its size, creating what we call an ecosystem. I took systematic measurements to verify this balance, from top to bottom of the scree-slopes, first in the Sahara, among the Tuareg, then among my friends the Inuit in northern Greenland, and found that if a single factor, humidity or temperature,

varied, however slightly, the compromise was disrupted and the process of finding the right balance had to start again.

The Inuit realized rather early that their understanding of the world began with stones. My debt to them is incalculable: they have an exceptional ability to read nature's book. The fact that their five senses are, through constant use, far more acute than ours—they can see in the dark—means that they can observe the world around them very closely. Learning from these great teachers, I gradually came to transfer my attention from stones to human beings.

We have a lot to learn about teaching from these peoples who for ten thousand years have been bringing up their children naturally, in a way very different from ours. They have no books and believe in children and adolescents learning by doing and by example, which is how they taught me. Bringing up children is, after all, "raising" them, awakening their self-awareness through the encounter of one culture with another, seeking out hidden wonders and discovering the *genius loci*.

■ ***So you were gradually introduced by the physical ecosystem to the social ecosystem?***

—The Inuit were a people without a written language, so they had no Homer, Montesquieu or Rousseau, yet they have established a social contract that would have fascinated Lenin. At the level of small groups of fifty to a hundred families, theirs is a communist, a truly egalitarian society, where everything is shared. There are no social classes because they want to prevent any accumulation of wealth, and land and property belong to the group. They even try to pool their thoughts: the first duty of Inuit when they meet is, as in any nomadic society for that matter, to converse and tell each other what they have been doing. Even families are affected: a ritual exchange of men and women takes place at certain times of the year, not only to cement relations among members of the group but also to prevent a particular man becoming the master of his companion, or vice versa. One child in three is handed over to a family that is not consanguineous. Children are the children of the group. But at the same time this is an anarchist society that rejects the state.

In addition to this social contract, which is concerned with the organization of persons and property, this society has a broad religious vision, shamanism, centred on the balance between man and nature, a vision that is not limited to the immediate environment but opens upwards to embrace the cosmos—earth, moon, sun and stars—in a profound understanding. The shaman is convinced that the world is held in balance and that due respect must be paid to certain age-old taboos whose meaning is wrapped in mystery but which obey their own underlying logic. As to reading nature's great book, it was by first studying stones that I discovered an invaluable key to deciphering it.

■ ***How does a person become a shaman?***

—The shaman starts out by subjecting himself to sexual and dietary asceticism. When he thinks that his education has gone far enough, he goes to a high point, a cliff facing the sun that is riven with fractures that put it in contact with earth-forces, like the Pythia of Delphi in ancient Greece. He stands there facing the sun and takes a rock which he rubs against another, for hours, days, weeks or months until the moment comes when he reaches a state of spiritual ecstasy. Sometimes nothing happens in the first year. He may come back again and again, until ecstasy takes place. He knows this is happening when he becomes two entities. He sees his body break up, his skin comes off, his bones are laid out on the ground before him! Reconstituted in the form of a bear or a walrus, he sees himself as a bear and hears himself talking like a bear. But there is a great danger that he will be unable to return, to recover his human state. Inuit art is obsessed by this anguish which is depicted in many sculptures of figures that are half-human, half-animal.

The idea of metamorphosis is undoubtedly a very important component of human thought, as in the return to the unity of the sexes, in which male and female are one. This great aspiration is often depicted by small androgynous statuettes. In some cases shamanistic initiation involves homosexuality, as it does in other traditional societies, notably among Amerindians.

■ *Which other peoples have you studied at close quarters?*

—I have been carrying out research for the last forty years in northern Greenland but I have also been many times on mission to northeastern Canada—Hudson's Bay and Baffin Land, to the central Arctic regions of Canada and the Alaskan societies of the Bering Strait area (Saint Lawrence Island).

The island of Ittygran in the Siberian Far North, an Inuit sanctuary since the 13th century.

I have lately turned my attention to northern Siberia. For forty years the Soviet government prevented me and all Westerners from going there. Then in 1989 I learned, through one of Mr Gorbachev's advisers, that I was being offered, in compensation for all those years lost to research, the chairmanship of the "Committee for the Defence of the Arctic Peoples of Russia" that had been set up under the Russian Cultural Fund, at present chaired by Nikita Mikhailov. I was at last to have an opportunity to visit the cradle of the Inuit people, born on those shores at the time of its migration from Asia towards Alaska.

An international expedition, the first since the October Revolution, went out there in 1990, with myself as scientific director. I have carried out thirty-one missions to the Arctic and this was one of the most fruitful of my career. It enabled me to visit a site of outstanding historical significance, the island of Ittygran, the Carnac of the Arctic, which was hidden from the eyes of the world by the Soviet authorities until 1976, when it was studied by the distinguished archaeologist Sergei Arutiunov. I was the first Westerner to set foot there. It is a small island, lying offshore to the north of a hunters' village, silent, deserted, with eagles circling overhead. Great spears point skywards and the skulls and jawbones of whales are set in lines along the shore.

From the thirteenth century onwards, groups of Inuit hunters came here to perform sacrificial rites in a state of mystical exaltation. The most interesting feature of the site is undoubtedly the numerical relationship that forms the basis for the alignment of fifteen groups of enormous whale jawbones, some weighing nearly 600 kilograms: the alignment follows a strict 2:4 alternation that refers back to the logical structures of the most ancient Chinese book of divination.

While investigating the stones on the island and checking their orientations against the map, I came upon a grave, a recent grave containing the remains of a Soviet Inuit hunter with a comb and a rifle by his side. These peoples have remained, at least in their innermost being, impervious to seventy years of indoctrination in dialectical materialism. The four batteries of psychological tests that I carried out provided evidence, when they were analysed by Marie-Rose Moro and Tobie Nathan, of their rich imaginary world dominated by the *Kelet*, or spirits, despite the fact that the Soviet government had banned the shamans, or at least banned them from practising shamanism.

■ *Was the Soviet system totally negative in this respect?*

—No. It has to be admitted that, concerning the Arctic regions, not everything about it was bad. A market economy would have been, and would still be, disastrous for traditional societies. Protected until now by a policy of guaranteed prices, the hunters and herdsmen of northern Siberia have managed to preserve their way of living and subsisting. By being kept out of the mainstream they have been spared the frightful media-borne contamination and other catastrophic influences that our so-called "advanced" civilization brings in its train. They have escaped the ravages of drugs that could decimate the peoples of Alaska, as smallpox and diphtheria decimated the Amerindian populations in the eighteenth century. They have also been preserved from Aids, a terrible threat to these traditional societies, whose relatively open-minded attitude to sex and to addiction to alcohol makes them particularly vulnerable.

In addition to the obvious mistake made by the Soviet authorities in trying to impose atheism upon the societies of northern Siberia, whose identity is based on a cosmic, religious vision, they also made the mistake of not forming a cadre of trained specialists from among these peoples who, since they were granted autonomy in 1926, were supposed to run their own affairs. I accordingly impressed upon the authorities that they should, as a matter of urgency, make it their business to form such a local elite.

■ *You were recently appointed President of the Saint Petersburg Polar Academy. . . .*

—A staff college for the peoples of the north was set up in Saint Petersburg under the aegis of the Russian Ministry of Education, the Ministry of National Minorities and Regional Policy, and the government of the Sakha Republic, and on my initiative. On 21

January 1994, it was transformed, in the course of a solemn ceremony at the celebrated Russian Geographical Society, into the Polar Academy. The authorities asked me to be its president, and I was honoured to accept. The Academy has a staff of sixty Russian teachers, the cream of Saint Petersburg's academic community, plus ten French experts whose places will in due course be taken by other European or American teachers. French is the first foreign language and is compulsory. Our aim is to help the twenty-six ethnic groups of northern Siberia to take charge of their own administration. I have given the Russian authorities my personal undertaking to train, in two-year courses, candidates selected by their respective autonomous regions. We have at present thirty students, aged around thirty, on each course. The celebrated Paris *Ecole nationale d'administration* is sponsoring us, and other leading French educational institutions are participating in the teaching activities, with the *Ecole des Hautes études en sciences sociales* and the Centre of Arctic Studies being responsible for overall co-ordination. As we would like to launch a daily paper for the far north, *Le Monde diplomatique*, the international affairs supplement of *Le Monde* newspaper, is also taking part in the project, and I have every hope that UNESCO will join in this undertaking, which is very much in its line of action.

For the time being, the trainees have to travel to Saint Petersburg, but it has been decided that a nomadic school will be set up. This means that every two years the Academy will send out a team comprising the year's top five students and their Russian and French teachers, all of whom will be on the same footing. The Sakha Republic will select a specific area of its territory for global study, covering environment, medicine, ethnography, education and the economy. The Sakha Republic was chosen as being the most advanced of the northern republics. Teachers and students alike will be billetted with the local inhabitants and with the reindeer herdsmen and will have to *enjoy* the cold. As I know these societies well, I am convinced that the teaching will have an infinitely greater impact by being integrated in this way into their lives. As happened to the geographer Arsenev in Kurosawa's great film *Derzou Ouzala*, shot in Siberia, the learner on his home ground will become the teacher.

■ ***How do you explain the fact that these peoples, who are obviously fascinated by our modern civilization since they want to be incorporated into it, are not afraid of losing their authenticity and their specific values?***

—They want to go down the road of development because of the deal they are being offered—nice houses with television, city lights and so on—without being told they will have to pay for these amenities and without necessarily having the means to do so. What is more, we descend on these societies in the role of conquerors with our technology, our cars and aircraft. We are well fed and well equipped, we've made it! And above all we come proclaiming aloud that we are going to help them, whereas in fact we are only looking out for new markets.

This is where it seemed to me there was an urgent need to step in. The north American Indians and the peoples of northern Siberia must be made fully aware that the deal they are being offered is a swindle whereby they will lose out completely. After losing their religion, their culture and their language they will lose their very selves.

■ ***You surely wouldn't propose a system of complete self-sufficiency.***

—Traditional societies should move forward at their own pace, which is not our pace; they should not go for abrupt change but for a slow, considered evolution so that they can take the best, not the worst, of what our Western civilization has to offer.

Like the physical world, the history of traditional societies has its own biological clock. We should help, as honestly as we can, to train the new elites so that they can choose for themselves, so that they can weigh the pros and cons of what is on offer. We should help these societies to an awareness of this. In order to do so we should, as a matter of priority, help them to train people who are capable of taking or leaving, in full knowledge of the issues, what we offer them.

Intellectuals, men of goodwill with no vested interests in the market, must help these people to understand and thwart our most subtle commercial machinations. By doing this we also defend our own long-term interests. If we continue to exploit them by pretending to help them, then sooner or later there will be a a terrifying revolt, perhaps even involving atomic weapons. We have an intellectual duty to act in such a way that our industrial societies cease to blindly export their pseudo-development, as they have done to Africa, with catastrophic results. Too many ruling-class Africans imitate us and despise their peasantry, rural people migrate to the cities to become functionaries—think of places like Dakar and Nouakchott—the creatures of a parasitic state dependent on the West. That is what is called neo-colonialism. They are not trustworthy representatives of their societies, but joke figures who will one day wreak horrible vengeance.

Cadres belonging to indigenous peoples must be trained as a matter of urgency, throughout the world.

In the Siberian Arctic, the situation is already alarming, what with leaking oil pipelines and nuclear pollution by the armed forces. This is an international problem, we are all concerned. Siberia is so vast that it influences the Arctic Ocean, at the top of the world, where climatic development is shaped. And who are the guardians of these waters if not the indigenous people, who have a vocation for ecology? Because of our obsession with short-term profits we cannot see the wood for the trees. Those whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad!

If it proved impossible to avoid pollution at the time of economic planning (Gosplan), what shall we do to prevent it when American and European companies flock to the Far North? Do we want to ruin the Far North in the same way as Amazonia? That is another reason for training the indigenous people—so that they can see all these dangers, decide what to do, and take their future in hand.

And let's be quite clear about this. We shan't be teaching them to defend their future out of generosity or charity. By protecting them we protect ourselves; we defend our own future on an earth that will at long last be human. ■

MODERN MANAGEMENT AND LOCAL TRADITIONS

by
Philippe d'Iribarne

The actor Sakata Hangoro III in the role of a warrior, Japanese print by Katsukawa Shunei (1762-1819).

BUSINESS firms, especially big industrial firms, are held up as a model of rationality and organization. Many countries where "traditional" cultures still prevail look to them to play a catalytic role in bringing about change and to challenge social practices that are looked down upon as archaic; they are supposed to be a force for modernization, not only of technology but of mentalities and forms of organization.

Credibility is lent to this view by the existence of international management methods, developed in the industrialized countries, which countries with less efficient economies are urged to adopt if they want their business organizations to become competitive. These methods are publicized by books on management, "business schools", certain management consultants and major institutions like the World Bank and the transnationals.

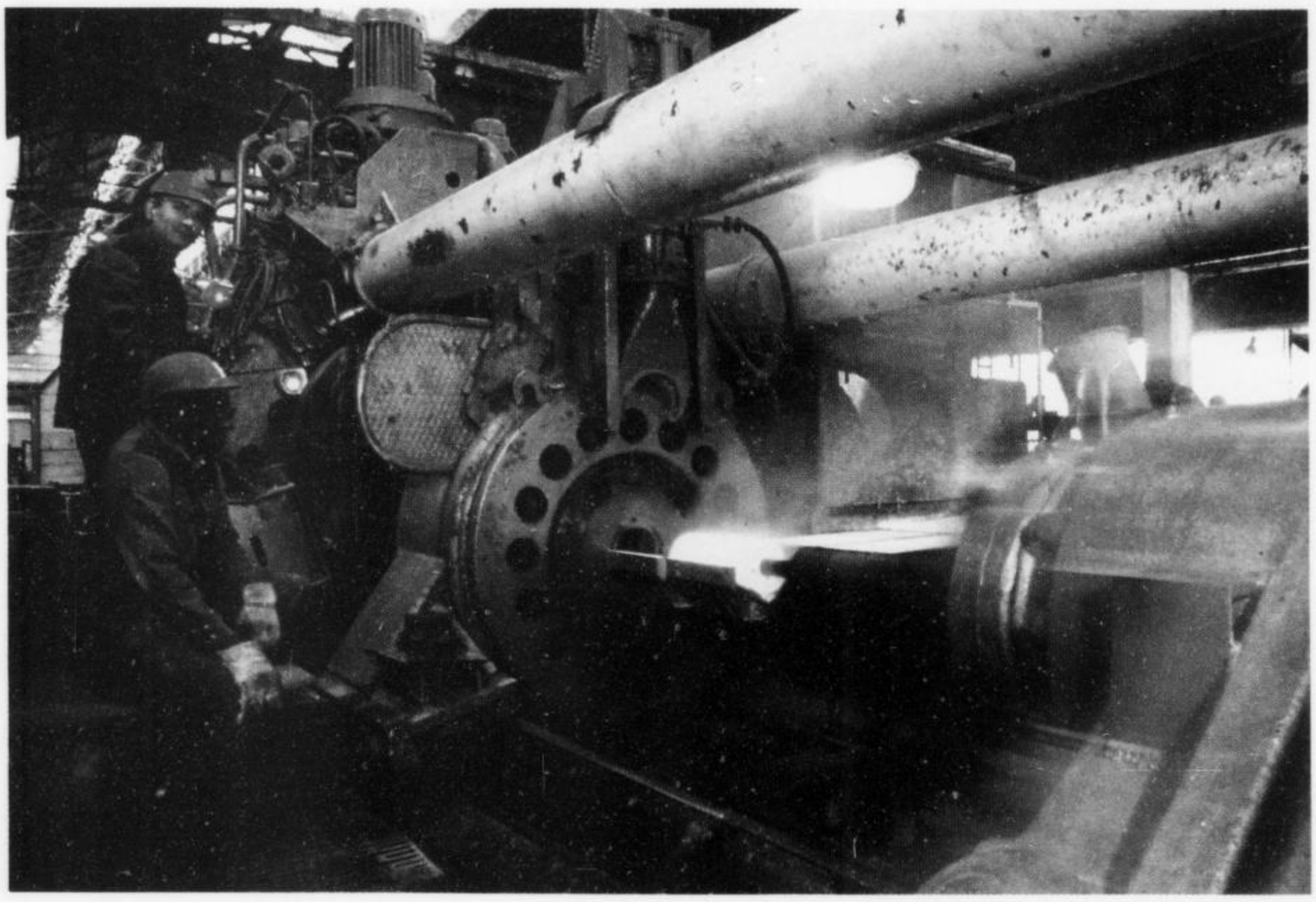
It might be supposed, looking at things this way, that there was a standoff between some universally valid organizational principle, represented by the "right" management methods, on the one hand, and, on the other, a host of specific traditions, each expressing specific prejudices, that need to be overcome if the highest levels of productivity are to be reached.

Reality is, however, obstinately at odds with this view. Japan has scored great economic successes while managing its businesses in its own particular way. American companies, long held up as a model of efficient, rational management, are now criticized for "short-termism" and over-compartmentalization, and the difficulty they have in making the necessary improvements seems to be linked to certain cultural characteristics peculiar to the United States.

Yet methods everywhere have been inspired by the American model. When consultants go off to far-flung corners of the planet to suggest remedies for ailing businesses, they come up with the same answers: explicit job descriptions, clearly formulated objectives and a free choice of the means for attaining them, quantifiable criteria for assessing performance, and performance-related rewards and sanctions.

These management methods do produce results—relatively objective assessment criteria are an incentive to work rather than to suck up to one's superiors, and the exercise of setting objectives provides a good opportunity to think problems through and find solutions to them—but they also have limitations. As a result of undue emphasis on the tangible, certain factors may be overlooked which, though subtle, contribute to the successful functioning of a business organization—goodwill gestures that create a good atmosphere and make for co-operation, informal aspects of customer service, and so on.

The cult of specific objectives, clear-cut responsibilities and quantifiable results is in fact the outgrowth of a particular political culture. In the American political tradition, any form of arbitrary power is viewed as creating servitude, and such arbitrary power is held strictly in check by the labour contract. John Locke, in his famous *Two Treatises of Government* (1690), thus evokes the "freeman" who "makes himself a servant to another by selling him for a certain time the service he undertakes to do in return for wages", but gives his employer only "a temporary power over him, and no greater than what is contained in the contract between them", as opposed to "slaves", who are "subjected to the absolute dominion and arbitrary power" of their masters. In the United States today, the contract binding superior to subordinate in the



Metalworkers, France.

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same way as a contract between buyer and seller still acts as a safeguard to the relationship between free individuals under the rule of law.

The French "feudal" model

This is by no means a universal model, and to prove it one need look no further than a European country like France. The French example is all the more convincing in that France, like the United States, proclaims its devotion to universal values and considers itself, regardless of any cultural specificity, to be the birthplace of human rights.

The rejection of servitude, in a relationship of subordination to a business firm, is just as forceful in France as in the United States, but it takes different forms and gives rise to different modes of organization. As long ago as the Middle Ages, whereas in England the relationship between free men was governed by contract, feudal allegiance to an overlord was the rule in France. The French thought certain forms of personal loyalty and allegiance compatible with freeman status while to the English they may have smacked of servitude. This allegiance was, however, primarily a way of showing respect for the privileges vested by custom in a noble office, not servility, and this attachment to the nobility of a certain estate—nowadays of a certain occupation—and to both its prerogatives and its obligations has impacted profoundly on the modern French business world.

The concatenation of contractual buyer-seller relationships that is the order of the day in American corporations is nowhere to be found in French businesses, where the general rule is for informal relations among occupational groups passionately attached to the rights and duties associated with their work. The same individuals who are so keen to "do a good job", professionally speaking, are equally hesitant about carrying out any orders from above that they see as damaging to their traditions, and the external show of respect for superiors that often results in France being ranked among the countries with a strongly hierarchical structure goes hand-in-hand with a high degree of independence in the performance of the functions that each considers to be his or her own.

Combining the rational and the traditional

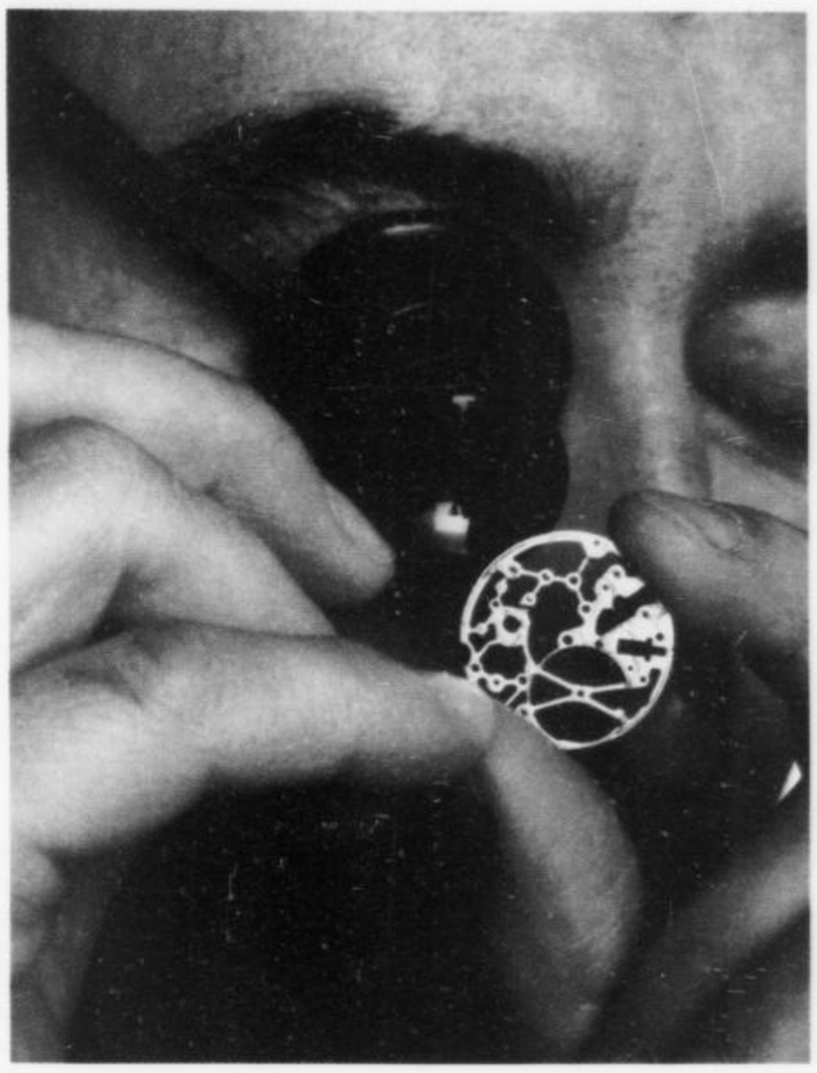
There is a common tendency to contrast what are supposed to be strictly rational organizational methods with what are described as purely traditional forms of behaviour, but in point of fact any efficient organization, in whatever cultural context, is both rational and traditional.

Business management presupposes the establishment of a set of structures and procedures for ensuring the division and co-ordination of labour. This demands a deliberate effort at rational organization directed towards the goal of efficiency. The desired results will not, however, be forthcoming unless the behaviour expected of the staff is in keeping with their sense of duty and their idea of authority and of respect for their own dignity—matters that bear the strong imprint of tradition.

The relationship thus created between rationally designed structures and procedures on the one hand and, on the other, local traditions is one of synergy, not competition. Tradition alone is powerless unless it is given expression in structures and procedures, whilst it is only in the light of tradition that the latter make sense in a way that makes it possible for them to be imposed and respected. The headway made in correlating these two factors and adapting them to different cultural contexts has so far been uneven.

Every industrial country has its own management tradition, often handed down in the form of local practices or of skills transmitted by word of mouth rather than in theoretical works. This tradition reflects the adaptation of a long-established cultural background to the needs of a modern economy. Built up gradually as the economy itself is built up, it is constantly being enriched, propelled by its own dynamics, or reinterpreting and then assimilating practices that have proved effective elsewhere.

In countries where they have generally been introduced from abroad, modern business organizations have brought with them methods often ill adapted to the local context, and the low level of success obtained by these methods is usually attributed to those countries' inability to run a modern economy, for which radical cultural changes are reputed to be necessary. Fortunately, there is little basis for this view, and the few efforts that have been made—too seldom, alas—to reconcile rational organization with tradition have produced many promising results—as the present issue of the *UNESCO Courier* sets out to show. ■



A Swiss watchmaker, heir to a tradition of craftsmanship over 300 years old.

PHILIPPE D'IRIBARNE, of France, is director of research at France's National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS). He has carried out comparative studies of business management systems in different countries and the relations between principles of rational organization and local traditions. He is the author of *Le chômage paradoxal* (PUF publishers, Paris, 1990) and *La logique de l'honneur* (Point-Seuil, Paris, 1993).

Business cultures

by Geert Hofstede

Every organization has its symbols, rituals and heroes

MANAGEMENT means getting things done through (other) people. This is true the world over. In order to achieve this, one has to know what needs to be done and one has to know the people involved. Understanding people means understanding their background, from which their present and future behaviour can be predicted.

Their background has provided them with a certain culture, the word *culture* being used in the sense of "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another". The "category of people" may be a nation, a region or an ethnic group, women or men (gender culture), old or young (age group and generation culture), a social class, a profession or occupation (occupational culture), a type of business, a work organization or part of it (organizational culture), or even a family.

Culture is composed of many elements, which may be classified in four categories: symbols, heroes, rituals and values.

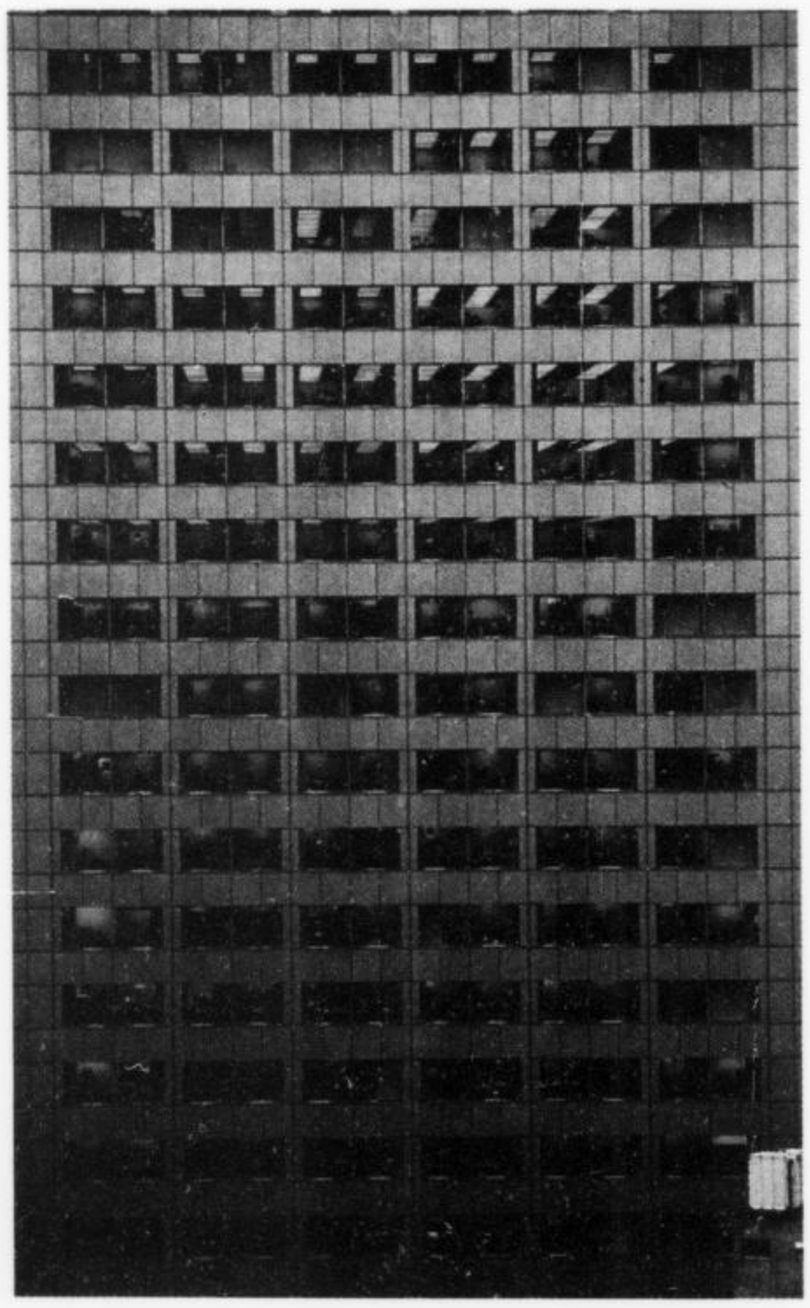
Symbols are words, objects and gestures which derive their meaning from convention. At the level of national cultures, symbols include the entire area of language. At the level of organizational culture, symbols include abbreviations, slang, modes of address, dress codes and status symbols, all recognized by insiders only.

Heroes are real or imaginary people, dead or alive, who serve as models for behaviour within a culture. Selection processes are often based on hero models of "the ideal employee" or "the ideal manager". Founders of organizations sometimes become mythical heroes later on, and incredible deeds are ascribed to them.

Rituals are collective activities that are technically superfluous but, within a particular culture, socially essential. In organizations they include not only celebrations but also many formal activities defended on apparently rational grounds: meetings, the writing of memos, and planning systems, plus the informal ways in which formal activities are performed: who can afford to be late for what meeting, who speaks to whom, and so on.

Values represent the deepest level of a culture. They are broad feelings, often unconscious and not open to discussion, about what is good and what is bad, clean or dirty, beautiful or ugly, rational or irrational, normal or abnormal, natural or paradoxical, decent or indecent. These feelings are present in the majority of the members of the culture, or at least in those persons who occupy pivotal positions.

Nationality (and gender as well) is an involuntary attribute; we are born within a family



An office building in Tokyo.

"Founders of organizations sometimes become mythical heroes later on and incredible deeds are ascribed to them." Above, head of Zeus (plaster cast, anonymous).

within a nation, and are subject to the mental programming of its culture from birth. Here we acquire most of our basic values. Occupational choice is partly voluntary (dependent on the society and family); it leads to choice of schools, and at school we are socialized to the values and the practices of our chosen occupation.

When we enter a work environment, we are usually young or not-so-young adults, with most of our values firmly entrenched, but we will become socialized to the practices of our new work environment. National cultures, therefore, differ mostly at the level of basic values, while occupational and, even more, organizational cultures differ more superficially (in their symbols, heroes and rituals).

National culture differences

Results from a number of research projects have led me to classify national cultures along five dimensions. The first four were found by comparing the values of employees and managers in fifty-three different national subsidiaries of the IBM Corporation. They have been labelled:

1) *Power distance*, or the degree of inequality among people which the population of a country considers as normal: from relatively equal to extremely unequal.

2) *Individualism*, or the degree to which people in a country have learned to act as individuals rather than as members of cohesive groups: from collectivist to individualist.

3) *Masculinity*, or the degree to which "masculine" values like assertiveness, performance, success and competition prevail over "feminine" values like the quality of life, maintaining warm personal relationships, service, caring, and solidarity: from tender to tough.

4) *Uncertainty avoidance*, or the degree to which people in a country prefer structured over unstructured situations: from relatively flexible to extremely rigid.

The table on page 14 lists for twenty-five out of the fifty-three countries studied the scores for these dimensions (the table also contains a fifth dimension that will be explained later). All scores are relative: the scales have been chosen so that the distance between the lowest and highest scoring country on each dimension is about 100 points.

The table shows that European countries

vary widely on all four dimensions. Power distances are large in France and Portugal; collectivism prevails over individualism in Portugal and Greece; Austria and Italy are very masculine, while Sweden and the Netherlands are very feminine; Belgium and France are uncertainty-avoiding, while Denmark and the United Kingdom easily accept uncertainty.

All these differences affect ways of management in these countries. Large power distances favour centralization, while small power distances favour decentralization. Collectivism favours group rewards and family enterprises, while individualism favours easy job-hopping and individual rewards. Masculinity favours competition and survival of the fittest while femininity favours solidarity and sympathy for the weak. Uncertainty avoidance favours strict rules and principles, while its opposite favours opportunism and tolerance of deviant behaviour.

The fifth dimension

In subsequent research, a fifth dimension of national culture differences has been found. Professor Michael H. Bond of the Chinese University of Hong Kong studied value differences among students in twenty-three different countries using a questionnaire originally designed in the Chinese language by Chinese scholars. Analysis of the data produced four dimensions, three of them very similar to three of the IBM dimensions (all except uncertainty avoidance), the fourth entirely new and very meaningful.

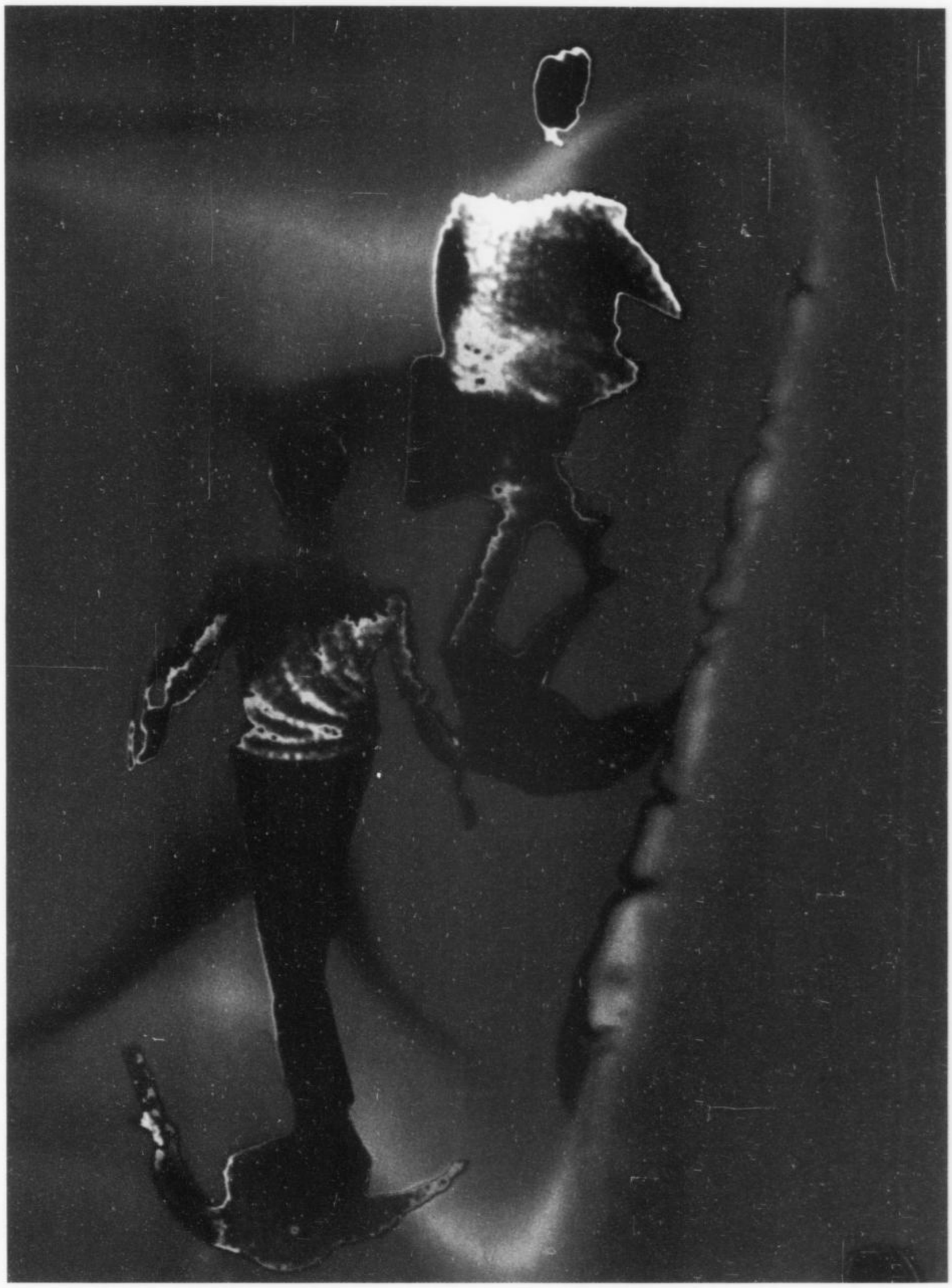
This fifth dimension was called "long-term orientation" (LTO) as against "short-term orientation". Values positively rated in LTO are thrift and perseverance; values negatively related are respect for tradition, and fulfilling social expectations, "keeping up with the Joneses".

The last column in the table lists the LTO scores by country, this time based on the data collected by Bond. The highest scores on the fifth dimension are all found in East Asian countries: Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan. As these are also the countries with the world's fastest rates of economic growth in the past twenty-five years, we can say that long-term orientation is strongly related to recent economic growth.

Not only values and practices, but even theories are products of culturally determined socialization. This has far-reaching consequences

Score for 25 countries on 5 dimensions of national values
Ranks: 1 = highest, 53 = lowest (for L.T. Orientation, 20 = lowest)

Country	Power distance		Individualism		Masculinity		Uncertainty avoidance		Long term orientation	
	Index (PDI)	Rank	Index (IDV)	Rank	Index (MAS)	Rank	Index (UAI)	Rank	Index (LTO)	Rank
Austria	11	53	55	18	79	2	70	24-25		
Belgium	65	20	75	8	54	22	94	5-6		
Brazil	69	14	38	26-27	49	27	76	21-22	65	5
Denmark	18	51	74	9	16	50	23	51		
Finland	33	46	63	17	26	47	59	31-32		
France	68	15-16	71	10-11	43	35-36	86	10-15		
Germany	35	42-44	67	15	66	9-10	65	29	31	11-12
Greece	60	27-28	35	30	57	18-19	112	1		
Hong Kong	68	15-16	25	37	57	18-19	29	49-50	96	1
India	77	10-11	48	21	56	20-21	40	45	61	6
Ireland	28	49	70	12	68	7-8	35	47-48		
Israel	13	52	54	19	47	29	81	19		
Italy	50	34	76	7	70	4-5	75	23		
Japan	54	33	46	22-23	95	1	92	7	80	3
Mexico	81	5-6	30	32	69	6	82	18		
Netherlands	38	40	80	4-5	14	51	53	35	44	9
Norway	31	47-48	69	13	8	52	50	38		
Portugal	63	24-25	27	33-35	31	45	104	2		
Spain	57	31	51	20	42	37-38	86	10-15		
Sweden	31	47-48	71	10-11	5	52	29	49-50	33	10
Switzerland	34	45	68	14	70	4-5	58	33		
Taiwan	58	29-30	17	44	45	32-33	69	26	87	2
Turkey	66	18-19	37	28	45	31-33	85	16-17		
United Kingdom	35	42-44	89	3	66	9-10	35	47-48	25	15-16
U.S.A.	40	38	91	1	62	15	46	43	29	14



for management training in a multicultural organization. Not only our techniques but even the categories in which we think may be unfit for a different environment.

Organizational cultures

Research data on differences in organizational cultures within a given country were collected in 1985 and 1986 in twenty work organizations or parts of organizations in Denmark and the Netherlands. The units studied varied from a toy company to two municipal police forces.

Analysis of the data showed large differences between units in symbols, heroes and rituals (we labelled the three together "practices"), but only modest differences in values. Different organizations within the same countries can maintain very different practices on the basis of fairly similar employee values.

Six independent dimensions made it possible to describe the larger part of the variety in organizational practices:

1) *Process-oriented* as opposed to *results-oriented* units, the former being dominated by technical and bureaucratic routines, the latter by

"Individualism favours easy job-hopping and individual rewards."

a concern for outcomes. This dimension was associated with the degree of homogeneity of the unit's culture: in results-oriented units, everybody perceived their practices in about the same way; in process-oriented units, there were vast differences in perception within the unit. We consider the homogeneity of a culture as a measure of its "strength"; strong cultures are more results-oriented than weak ones, and vice versa.

2) *Job-oriented* as opposed to *employee-oriented* units. Job-oriented cultures assume responsibility for the employees' job performance only, and nothing more; employee-oriented cultures assume a broader responsibility for their members' well-being. A unit's position on this dimension seems to be largely the result of historical factors, such as the philosophy of its founder(s) and the presence or absence in its recent history of economic crises with collective layoffs.

3) *Professional* as opposed to *parochial* units. In the former, the (usually highly educated) members identify primarily with their profession; in the latter, the members derive their identity from the organization for which they work.

4) *Open systems* as opposed to *closed systems*. This dimension refers to the style of internal and external communication, and to the ease with which outsiders and newcomers are admitted.

5) *Tight internal control* as opposed to *loose internal control*. This dimension deals with the degree of formality and punctuality within the organization. It is partly a function of the unit's technology: banks and pharmaceutical companies can be expected to show tight control, research laboratories and advertising agencies loose control; but even with the same technology, units still differ on this dimension.

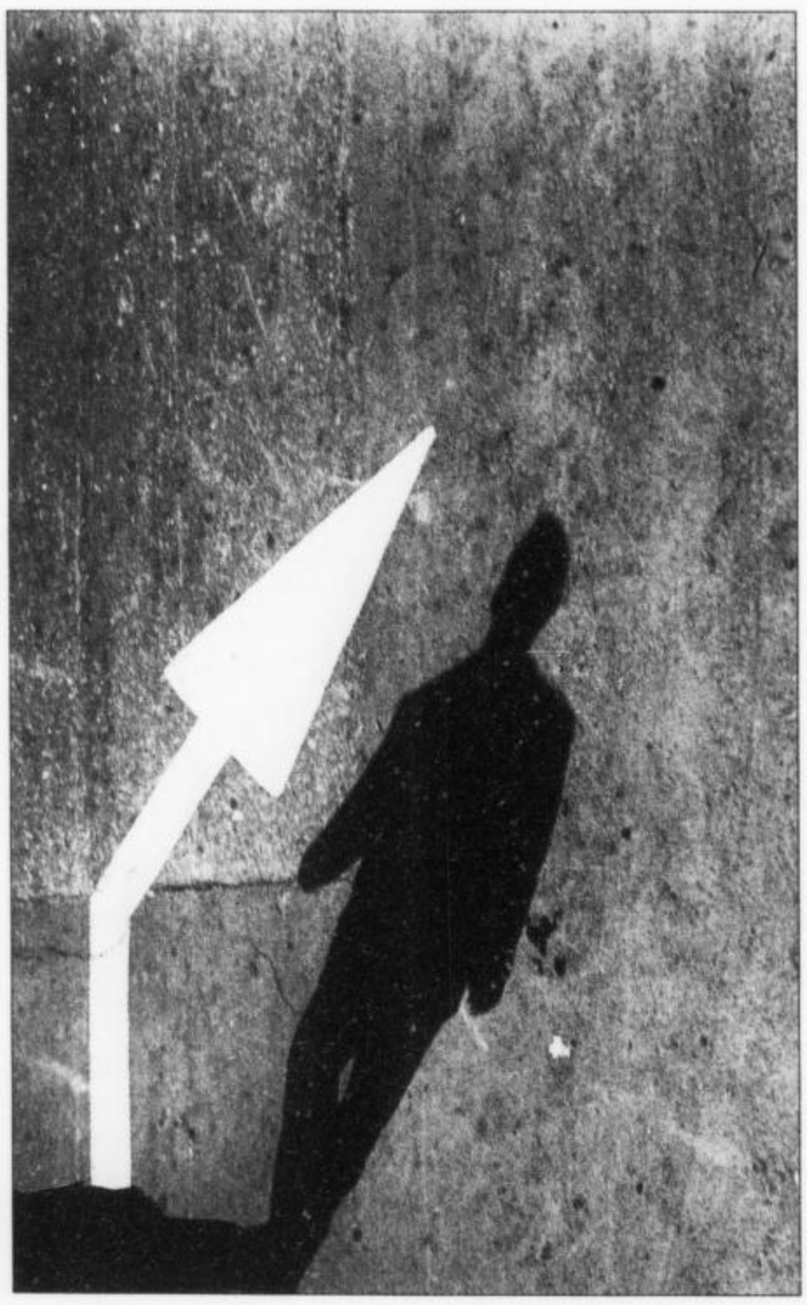
6) A *pragmatic* as opposed to a *normative* way of dealing with the environment, in particular with customers. Service units should be found towards the pragmatic (flexible) side, units involved in the application of legal rules towards the normative (rigid) side, but reality does not always correspond to this pattern.

According to this research, what a person has to learn when (s)he joins a work organization is mainly a matter of practices. Employee values have been developed in the family and the school; they play a role in the selection and self-selection process for the job. The workplace can only change people's values to a limited extent. In the popular literature, organization cultures are often presented as a matter of values. The confusion arises because this literature does not distinguish between the values of the founders and leaders and those of the bulk of employees.

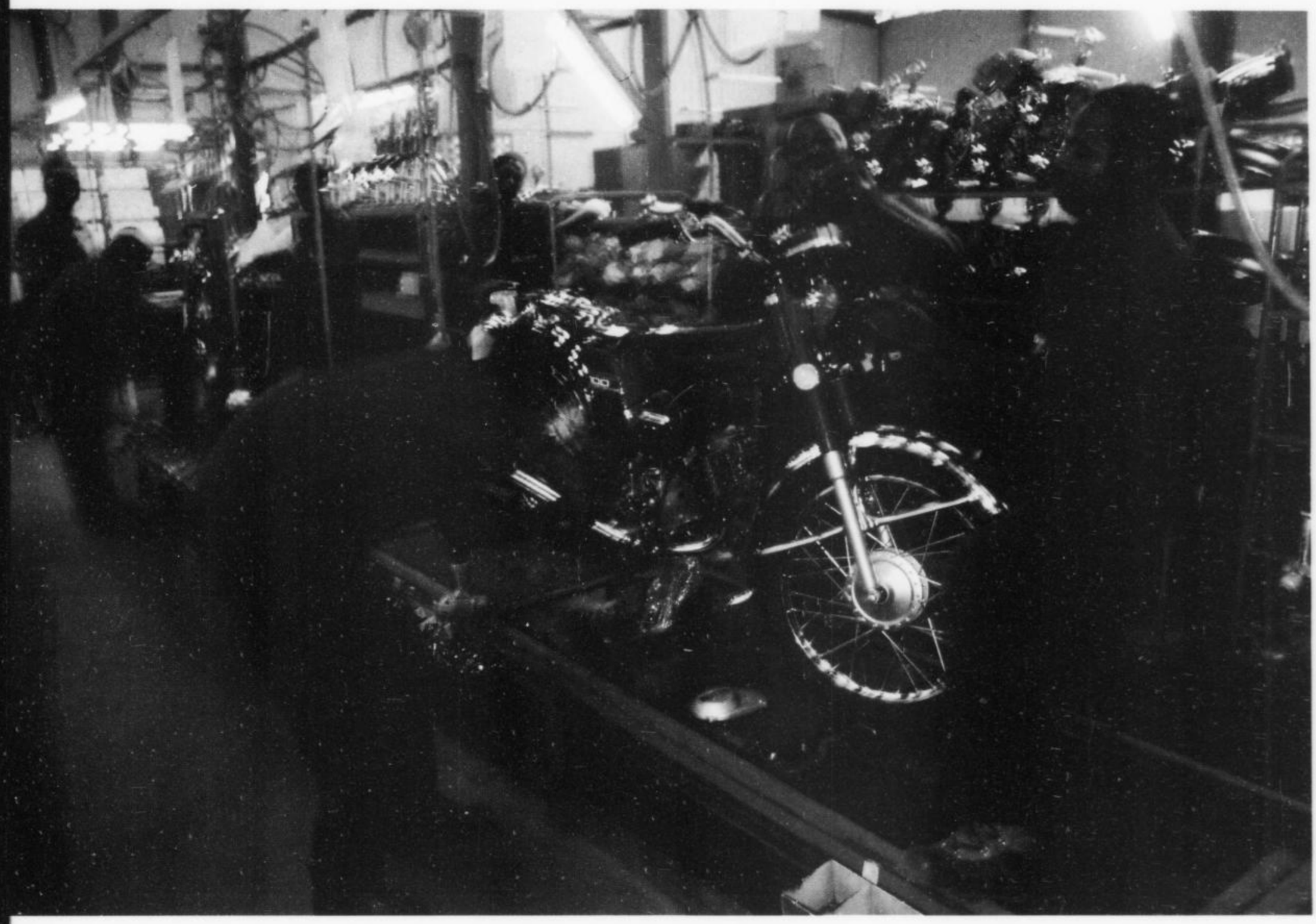
Founders and leaders, on the basis of *their* values, create the symbols, the heroes and the rituals that constitute the daily practices of the organization's members. However, members only to a limited extent have to adapt their personal values to the organization's needs. A work organization, as a rule, is not a "total institution" like a prison or mental hospital. Organizational cultures according to our data reside at a more superficial level of mental programming than the things learned previously in the family and at school. In spite of their more superficial nature, organizational cultures are still hard to change because they have developed into collective habits. Changing them is a top management task that should be based on a strategy and a cost-benefit analysis. Here again there is no single formula for success.

All statements in this article should be seen as only "statistically" true: they are common trends, but individuals may differ from them. Within each country there is a wide range of individuals, and this fact too should be taken into account in order to manage successfully. However, an insight into cultural differences will prevent us from attributing to an individual's personality forms of behaviour which are normal in his or her country, and from trying to apply supposedly universal success formulas to people who are not universal. ■

"Employee values have been developed in the family and the school. . . . The workplace can only change people's values to a limited extent."



GEERT HOFSTEDE, of the Netherlands, taught organizational anthropology and international management at the University of Limburg, Maastricht, before becoming the first director of the Institute for Research on International Co-operation (IRIC). His most recent book is *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (McGraw Hill, London, 1991).



TOGO ✔ # Going by the book

■ *by Alain Henry and Yao Badjo* ■

A case of efficiency based on scrupulous observance of a rule-book that contains echoes of village traditions

IN his account of the 1948 strike on the Dakar-Niger Railway, the Senegalese writer and film director Sembene Ousmane recalls how one of the European supervisors said: "If ever we go, there'll be nothing left"[1]. The phrase has come down to the present day as a kind of curse. Many people still believe African businesses are foredoomed to hopeless inefficiency, while on the World Bank's reckoning there are too many foreign experts in Africa.

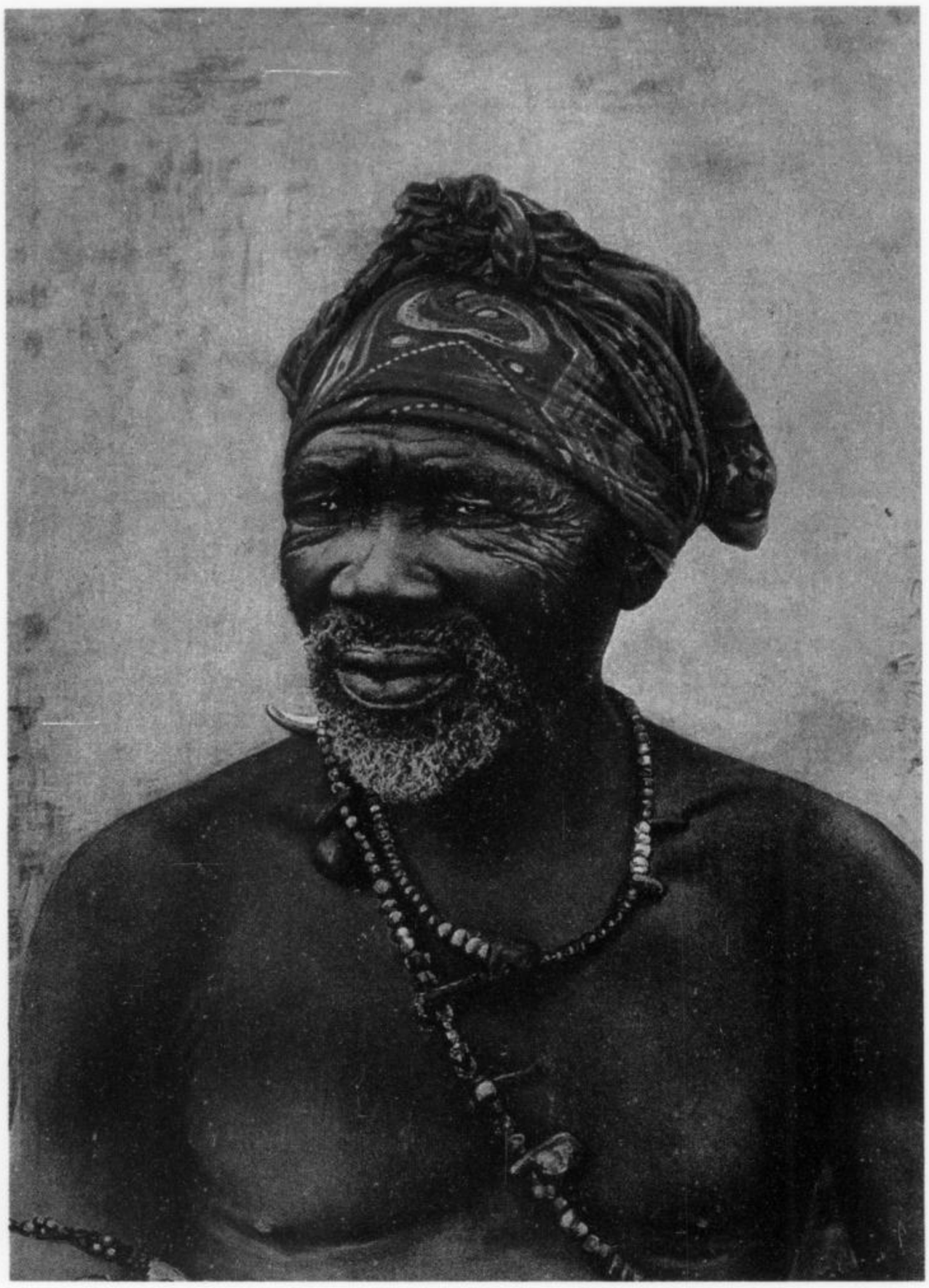
Should we doubt, as some people do, whether African cultures are compatible with industrial modernization? It is by no means certain that we should, as is shown by the following example of an African business that is getting excellent results.

Above, a motorcycle assembly line in Burkina Faso.

Detailed instructions

The enterprise in question, which we shall call STAR, is an industrial firm producing and selling consumer goods manufactured to international standards. When we visited it, the books were balanced. The World Bank itself cites it as an example to be followed, and there is only one European white-collar worker among its 650 employees. While its success is certainly attributable to management style, it is obvious that it also has a motivated workforce[2].

Visitors curious to know the reasons for this dynamism are told that there are written rules of procedure. They are shown manuals that set



Late 19th-century photo of a "medicine man" in southern Africa.

forth precisely what each employee is supposed to be doing. Procedures for carrying out maintenance work, making out invoices, stock-taking, mailing and even organizing the end-of-year staff party are covered in surprising detail. The manuals even specify the frequency with which such routine tasks as the sending of telexes should be done. Where necessary, alternative solutions are suggested, and there are repeated reminders of the need to ensure that particular points have not been overlooked. Former employees recall with a smile one of the first items in these manuals, explaining how to receive customers and advising that they be treated "with an iron hand in a velvet glove". Though less detailed for the upper echelons, the instructions nevertheless cover every post, up to that of managing director.

Equally surprising is the interest taken in the manuals. Supervisors advise their staff to read them "like novels", and everyone, from shop-floor level to the boardroom, refers constantly to them. STAR is thus more fully equipped in this respect than European firms, most of which have little if any of such documentation. This codification of working practices may, it is true, be reminiscent of Taylorism-style "scientific management", but with the significant difference that it emanates from the workforce itself, not from some outside authority.

It is worth pointing out the influence this example has had in sub-Saharan Africa. A major Cameroonian firm, for instance, recently issued a manual in twelve volumes of about a thousand pages each, and one of the first steps to be taken when the Power Company in Côte d'Ivoire was nationalized was the revision, in collaboration with the staff, of the rules and regulations.

Respect for the written word

When the manuals were first issued, the employees of STAR are said to have been satisfied to "find what part they were required to play". According to some of the managerial staff, the object was to "channel behaviour patterns", so that employees were not "tempted to do the first thing that came into their heads". Apart from providing a useful way of learning skills and passing them on, these manuals thus meet a widely-felt need and fit in with prevalent ways of thinking. Those for whom they are intended rely on them to "safeguard themselves against oversights". Whereas in the Western world an oversight is usually regarded as misconduct, here it is accepted as part of "human nature". It is only to be expected that numerous checks and verifications should be carried out in order to combat shortcomings that are tolerated in the social environment but are not allowed in industry.

Staff in enterprises without manuals have a hard time fending off inadmissible requests from colleagues. Unless justified by reference to the rules, a refusal is taken as being "unfriendly", while, conversely, failure to abide by explicit instructions is put down to thoroughly reprehensible "shirking" or even "troublemaking". For the rules to provide this kind of shelter, however, it must be clear that it is impossible to get round them. Their application is therefore closely monitored and they are observed to the letter to avoid any charge of subjective interpretation. The respect thus shown for the written word gives the lie to certain clichés about the oral nature of African culture.

Traditional ethics in a modern form

The STAR manuals may be regarded as an adaptation to the world of industry of the precepts by which village life was traditionally ruled. They proceed from a social obligation of goodwill, and enable people to be judged fairly on their intentions. The administrative officer herein plays a role comparable with that of the sorcerer-cum-healer to whom villagers used to turn to unmask those who wanted to harm the community: those found to be "at fault" are given a severe dressing-down.

Many African tales illustrate the necessity of understanding a neighbour's ulterior motives, while other stories set up the figure of the true and

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faithful friend as a social ideal. Similarly, a good man is one who can show that his intentions are good. It therefore seems justifiable to judge individuals by what they have *accepted* to do rather than by what they have *succeeded* in doing.

A strange misunderstanding

Considering how effective they are, one would have expected STAR's methods to have gained widespread acceptance, but this is not yet the case. Foreign experts, French in particular, who have been approached about introducing them are fairly hesitant, finding it hard to believe that they could act as an incentive. In their cultural background, rules are mainly there to be interpreted, and they would prefer not to be "straitjacketed" by pettifogging procedures that seem to them unlikely to encourage a sense of responsibility.

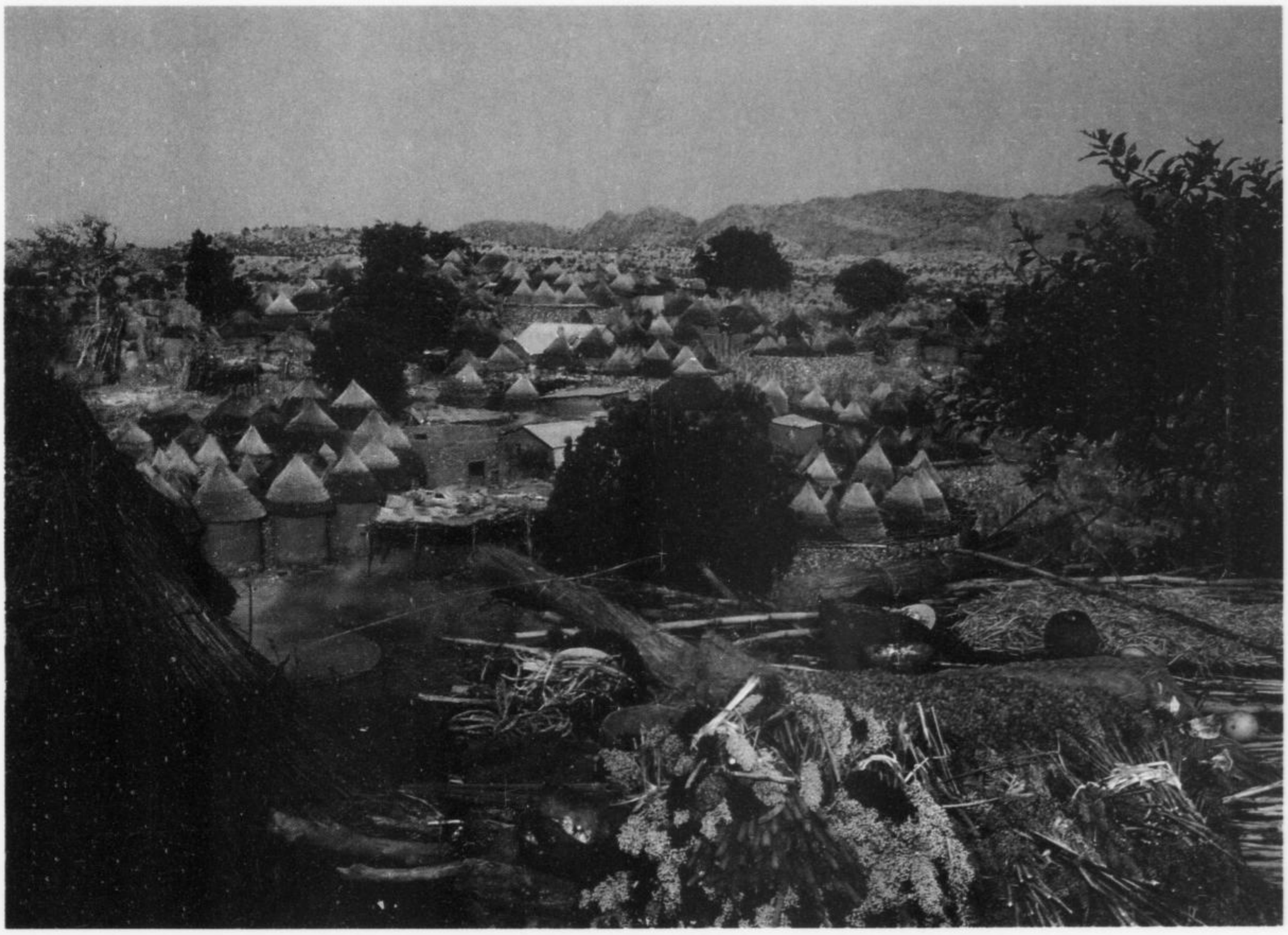
Africans themselves believe the opposite, and foreign experts' reluctance is put down to the fact that it is in their interest to keep their skills to themselves—an explanation reinforced by recollections of the colonial-era overseers who carried a notebook around in their pockets to mark down the settings of all their machines. It is true that the manuals fulfil something of the same role as the foreign experts, who are often called in to validate the "objectivity" of administrative decisions, but who, in the belief that they are showing greater respect for their African partners, would rather suggest new management methods than get to grips with existing procedures. Perhaps unwittingly, they are thus helping to prolong their own presence.

Efficient local management of businesses is of the greatest importance for the development of the African economies. Some experts, thinking they have found the solution, have suggested that workers be given individual objectives against which to be assessed, but in the African context any criticism bearing upon individual results is seen as a personal attack and soon causes strongly hostile reactions.

Such imported methods stem from a different conception of how people work as a group. They are unsuited to the local mentality and this explains why they fail, a failure wrongly ascribed to some inherent shortcoming in the cultures concerned. It may be easier than it seems to change outlooks: all that is needed is to bear in mind the specific characteristics of the host society and to encourage foreign experts to adapt themselves thereto—by reminding them of the old African saying that "a foreigner is a baby who needs to let himself be cossetted and trained". ■

1. Sembene Ousmane, *Les bouts de bois de Dieu*, Le Livre contemporain, 1960, Presse Pocket, Paris.
2. For a detailed case study of this business, see "Vers un modèle du management africain", by A. Henry, in *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 124, XXXI-4, 1991.

Some present-day management procedures in Africa recall the rules that governed traditional village life (see article). Below, a village in northern Cameroon.



TUNISIA

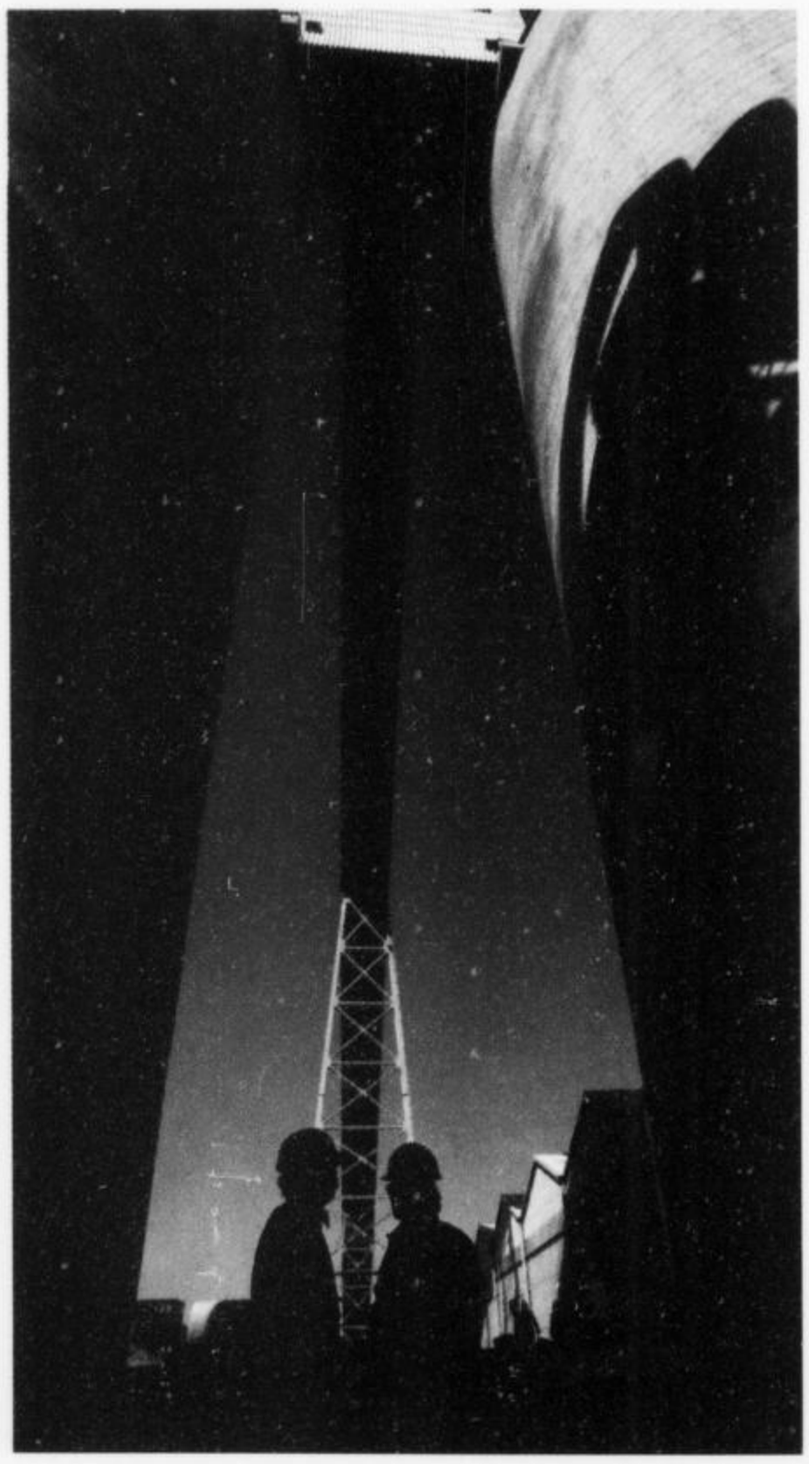
✔ They do it their way

by Riadh Zghal

Sometimes the most efficient management style is to take things as they come

'My father always told me: 'When you work, always remain *aziz*'!" the workman we were interviewing began. *Aziz* means "dignified", but also has connotations of pride, independence, self-respect. In other words, a distinction must be made between someone who sells his labour for wages and someone who sells himself, between the labour of a free man and that of a slave. Popular culture, however, equates paid employment with servitude, as these proverbs attest: "The olive tree is wealth; work in the service of men is degradation", "Only destitution drives a free man to work for a free man", and "A man who works under the orders of another is a dying man". Other sayings speak of the need to keep one's dignity at any price: "Better to die than suffer humiliation" and "Suffer hunger rather than accept kindness from someone who will later remind you of your debt".

This rejection of working for others has roots in the religion itself, which recognizes no intermediary between Allah and man. The Qur'an glorifies the brotherhood of believers and extols justice, an implicit warning to the strong to deal fairly with the weak. Belief in the worth of the human person and equality before God is moral compensation for the downtrodden.



A chemical factory in Qafsa, a part of Tunisia that is rich in phosphates.

"Woolliness" in the workplace

This conception of man in the workplace reveals a fundamental contradiction: on the one hand, the cruel realities of a human society made up of rich and poor, of nobles and commoners, of scholars and the unschooled, where to work in the service of others is for most people a necessity; on the other hand, a belief in the equality of all and the need to safeguard one's dignity while working for others. How can this dilemma be resolved?

One possible response is resignation, underpinned by a belief in fate, *mektub*—that which is written, the path God traces for each of us. Another possibility is to draw a line between working time and time spent outside work, thus maintaining at least a semblance of independence.

A third response consists of looking to paternalism to provide a counterweight to the theoretically humiliating state of being a subordinate. In the framework of a paternalistic relationship, the subordinate looks up to his superiors, wishing to see his interests, even outside the workplace, defended by the hierarchy. He places feelings above the objective definition of individual rights and duties. This primacy of emotional responses

Festivities in Tatouine, southern Tunisia.

gives rise to a charismatic style in the exercise of authority and makes for situations that are not cut-and-dried.

Organizations usually put down markers of some kind so that their members know where they stand and can predict the behaviour of others. What we have observed in the Tunisian workplace is a certain reluctance to formulate precise rules for dealing with particular problems. Where rules have to be established, they are left deliberately ambiguous and lend themselves to diverse interpretations. Individual responsibilities are loosely or poorly defined, and when a discussion is opened on a specific question, it is often suspended without a clear decision being taken.

This "woolliness" is not confined to the workplace; it also manifests itself in ordinary life. In a changing society where traditional values are continuously being questioned, uncertainty predominates when any new situation arises.

Landmarks in an uncertain world

This indeterminacy, associated with paternalism, gives rise to a strong attachment to interpersonal relationships and to social allegiances. The active networks of solidarity that grow up between individuals belonging to the same family, region, school or even workplace provide some landmarks in an uncertain world.

In short, to understand the behaviour of the Tunisian worker, one must bear in mind a whole range of cultural factors: attachment to the values of equality and dignity, the role of paternalism as a regulator in situations where inequality is inevitable, the absence of regulations, indeterminacy and the importance of relationships based on membership of social groups. Taken individually, each of these factors is found in other cultures, but this particular combination of cultural parameters is what distinguishes the Tunisian case.

Going against this cultural profile can disrupt the smooth operation of a business organization. In Tunisian businesses administered in a bureaucratic fashion (i.e. with a formal hierarchy and impersonal authority based on a set of rules and competence), we found many cases of attitudes that are hardly conducive to efficiency. The workers are disinclined to work because of the influence—real or imagined—of personal relationships on career prospects. The supervisor is judged, not on his competence, but on his friendliness and courtesy. His authority may

The town of Kairouan, huddled around the 9th-century Great Mosque.

be undermined if he does not come from the same social group as his subordinates, and the absence of well-defined procedures, coupled with the feeling that paid employment is undignified, invalidates that authority.

A minimum of regulations

On the other hand, a business which takes account of this cultural reality has a better chance of achieving a relatively satisfactory performance. A comparative study of productivity in one industrial enterprise brought to our notice a workshop where an absolute minimum of regulations paradoxically went together with a relatively high productivity.

The workers in this factory were unhappy with their pay—they considered their wages were too low or unfairly distributed—but they were nonetheless concerned about the survival of the business and were afraid of being dismissed or of being forced to take early retirement. They were therefore prepared to maintain a minimum level of productivity without pushing themselves too hard. This being the case, one of the supervisors had the idea of reducing to a minimum the distance between himself and his workers. He adopted a more flexible style of management by rotating assignments: the operator of a certain machine might be shifted to another or given a manual job to do, his assistant taking charge of the machine if need be. This flexibility softens the differences in status between the workers and reduces fatigue and boredom by allowing them to share the unpleasant jobs. It also contributes to the smooth running of the workshop in the absence of key personnel. The supervisor himself told us that the production rate does not slow down when he is not there.

This system of organization creates a kind of community in which social and professional differences are blurred and where productivity levels, more or less tacitly agreed, are the responsibility of everyone. Although this does not dispel the feelings of frustration and injustice—many workers are convinced that they work harder than their colleagues without getting anything in return for their extra effort and competence—these aggressive sentiments are diverted away from the shop floor towards top management, which is held responsible for the unfairness of the wage system, and this helps to keep shop-floor relations on a fairly even keel.

This shop was considerably more efficient than the other two shops in the factory, which were run on more authoritarian lines.

This form of organization of work might appear to have been inspired by the most advanced modern management methods, but what had happened was, basically, that in a context of general under-productivity and in the absence of an organizational policy, the supervisor had simply adapted his management style to the mentality of his workers, without the least reference to a theoretical framework. ■

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MEXICO ✓

Local loyalties: a hidden asset

by Jean Ruffier and Daniel Villavicencio

A modern factory can run smoothly without a highly skilled workforce

ACCORDING to an idea so widespread that it has almost become a truism, ultra-modern factories that work properly are only to be found in countries with industrial experience, high-quality infrastructures, plentiful capital and a skilled workforce. If accepted, this idea would mean that the less developed countries are inevitably condemned to backwardness, and would commit the world to an increasingly unfair division of labour and wealth. Yet companies in various parts of the world are successfully using sophisticated technology without having a skilled workforce or a strong industrial background.

Such cases are of course rare. They have also been very little studied. Many research workers have investigated the most efficient factories in Japan, Europe and North America, but their conclusions are only valid for a limited number of countries that enjoy similar conditions. In this article we shall see how a small factory sixty kilometres from Mexico City has managed to become highly competitive at producing yoghurt.

Teething troubles

Beyond an ungated level crossing lies a red-brick estancia built around a chapel, a relic of past grandeur. Here a French multinational company has set up a yoghurt factory—not just anywhere but in the middle of a big cattle farm. This once had its own milk-packing shop, but it eventually closed down, and the herd was considerably reduced. Only a tenth of the milk used to make the yoghurt comes from the estancia.

Apprentices being trained at a car factory in Puebla, Mexico.

The estancia provided some of the factory's first workers, and the French managers who came to start it up and instal the automated production lines took great pains to train them. The factory had, however, been planned and built as though it were in Europe, and the most advanced equipment had therefore been selected for it—an ill-considered choice, given that the factory was one of the first in the group to open in a country without much of an industrial tradition. Machines were brought in, and only then were people recruited to operate them. The company set about initiating the old dairy's best workers into the operation of modern plant, and managed it—not very well, but at least the factory was running.

Then an unforeseen conflict broke out between the representatives of workers on the old estancia and the local branch of the food industry union, which they wanted to leave. The management was powerless to prevent the victory of the union, which managed to force it to dismiss the dissident workers' representatives. In this way the company lost its most highly-trained employees, who were in charge of the most complex parts of its plant.

As a result of these events, which took place five years after the factory started up, the French management had to begin recruiting again. It took on farm workers, recruited from far enough away to ensure that the coalition that gave rise to the conflict did not re-form. The factory made a new start: it went on installing machinery, and soon the new manager was its only French employee. Two years later it ranked among the most efficient in its group. How did it become so successful?

A poorly qualified workforce

By and large, the operatives' only work experience had been as farm labourers or domestic servants. To start with, many workers could neither read nor write. They knew nothing about the dairy industry, and had never even seen yoghurt until they arrived in the factory, which was one of the first in Mexico to make it. We looked in vain for home-made produce of a similar kind on the local market. Hence, when the workers joined the company it was their first taste both of factory work and also of the product they were going to make.

In the other factories in the group there are no illiterate workers, and those who operate the yoghurt-making equipment have at least some technical knowledge of food processing—and they have been eating yoghurt since childhood.

In degree of specialization there is the same contrast. The Mexican factory, though highly automated, has neither skilled operators nor electronics engineers. At all levels of its hierarchy it is short of competent staff, which is hardly surprising given that the dairy industry is almost non-existent in Mexico. Nevertheless it works perfectly, and its yoghurt is renowned for its quality. It is still highly competitive, even though it now has to compete with other factories some of which enjoy preferential treatment that enables them to purchase milk at subsidized prices. How does it manage to use state-of-the-art technology without any of the advantages that more developed countries have in this respect?

On the production line, knowledge is power

The main difficulty for ultramodern companies stems from the great complexity of their equipment. Making yoghurt successfully on fully automated production lines means not only understanding dairy industry technology but also having a clear idea about how the equipment works and where it is located, and about container capacities and the transit time of the product. It means knowing something about electronic programming, and being able to trace and repair mechanical and electronic faults—to say nothing of human error, technical breakdowns and variations in the quality of the raw materials, particularly milk.

Nobody is knowledgeable enough to master all the machinery and production processes single-handed. Exchange of information is therefore crucial, and this is where things get com-

"Amate", a bark painting by a Mexican folk artist.

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A ceremonial meal during the San Andrés fiesta in Mexico's Chiapas state.

plicated. The workmen are not willing to pass on what they know. A technician who taught all-comers what he had learnt, and so enabled them to operate his piece of machinery, would thereby become less indispensable. He supposes that the system could then do without him. Thus the technicians all try to keep some of their knowledge to themselves, thereby forcing the others to bargain for their co-operation.

The dilemma is that if those in charge of production do not exchange enough information, it is difficult for them to deal with unforeseen production problems. Conversely, if they do not protect themselves they become interchangeable, and their efforts at self-improvement in their jobs will never be noticed or rewarded. Furthermore, interchangeability calls to mind one of the great bugbears of Mexican culture: the doppelgänger or double, a malignant being that can cause confusion and take a person's place.

There is an obvious contradiction here between the general interest and that of individuals. The workers have everything to gain from an efficient factory—both higher wages and greater job security—so it would be in their interests to communicate to the fullest extent. But no one wants to give up all the information he possesses.

Building up local loyalties

From their first conflict the factory workers learnt that they were vulnerable and could count neither on the union (which could turn against them) nor on the management (which was weak and could be forced into sackings). Most of them had given up farm work to go into industry, thereby boosting their incomes but losing their place in their traditional society. In their new jobs they were again in danger of losing everything, and their only safeguard was a new form of solidarity, which they were to build inside the factory, in secret, on the basis of their own traditions.

There are many different kinds of links between the workmen. One is the system of *compadres*, under which they are committed to a broadly reciprocal, even-handed interchange of favours, such as acting as godparents for each other or each other's children at christenings, first communions and betrothals. When one of the *compadres* helps another to build a house, or someone else to cope with health problems or financial difficulties, he does so in the certainty that in case of need the *compadres* will not let him down. Another, still stronger link is that between *cuates* or drinking companions, who

confide in each other without inhibition, and are sworn to complete loyalty. The *compadres* system is common knowledge, but the network of *cuates* is kept a secret.

Sociability inside the factory may also take other forms, such as family ties and more or less discreet liaisons. The women—a very tightly-knit group—are in general opposed to these liaisons, which may threaten the cohesiveness of their group. These women workers are of course in a rather special position because of their financial independence. They enjoy a degree of independence that they consider threatened both within the factory, where some of them are subjected to sexual pressures, and also outside, where their families try to get them to resume their traditional role in the home. To protect their independence they organize a range of out-of-hours sports and games, from which men are excluded.

All these networks have contributed greatly to the technical success of the factory, in particular by allowing the workmen to find a place of their own in the production system.

Group loyalty and human error

In order to explain to us how yoghurt is made on an industrial scale, a French engineer used equations; a Mexican workman showed us the pipes that carry the milk. We cannot say which was the better explanation: we felt we understood them both.

The difference between these two approaches is especially interesting when it comes to tracking down the cause of a breakdown. The French engineer will rely on a complete diagram of the production system, whereas the Mexican workman will visualize the progress of the milk in his mind's eye and think what might have happened at each point in the circuit. His big handicap is that he is only familiar with part of the circuit, and so he has to collate his knowledge with that of his colleagues. Such exchanges, which oblige the individual workman to lift a corner of the veil of mystery on which his authority in the company is based, are quite safe when they take place between *compadres* or *cuates*, whose solidarity is total. In other words, membership of a solidarity network makes it possible to play the production game with less risk.

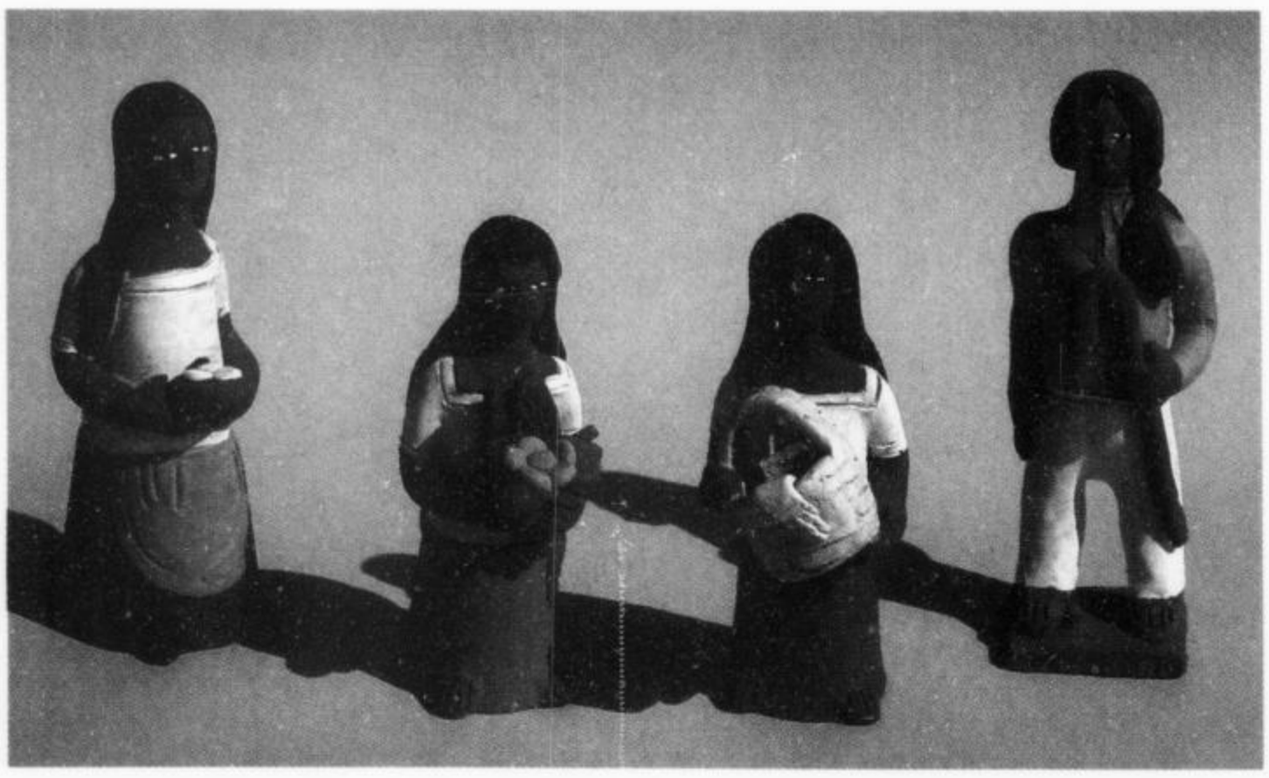
The example of human error is particularly telling. Most breakdowns involve a human element—a mistake, negligence, or wrong treatment of a mechanical failure. In order not to have to admit to his mistake in front of someone else, the culprit first tries to repair the damage himself—at the risk of compounding the error and making things worse. To protect himself from possible punishment, he is tempted to report the breakdown without mentioning what he did after it happened, and this makes it far more difficult to find out what has gone wrong. By revealing his mistake to comrades who will not betray him, the workman does his best to keep production going whilst at the same time safeguarding his own interests.

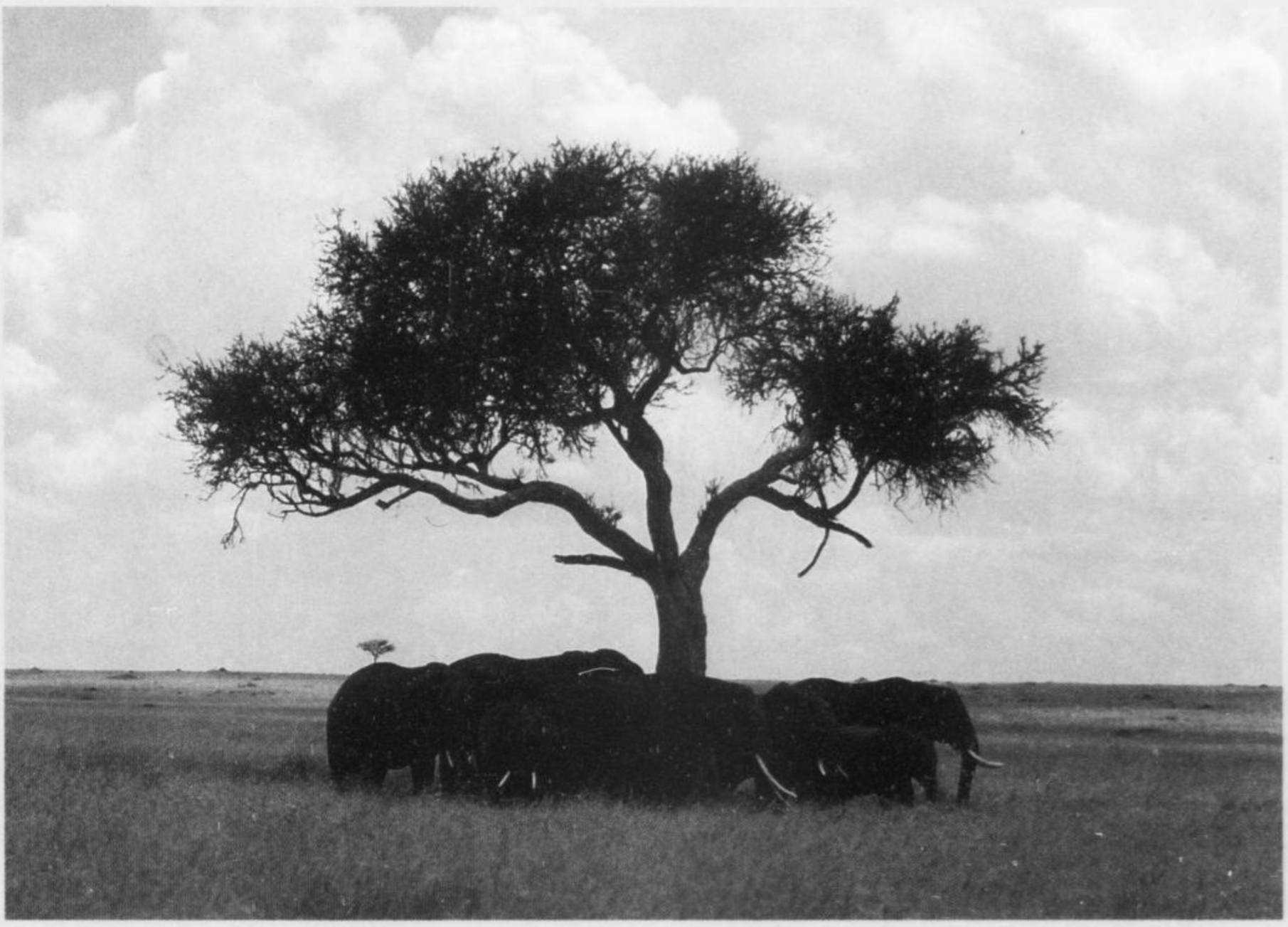
Our investigation showed that the solidarity networks extended over various parts of the factory and several levels of its hierarchy. They are a key factor in the efficiency of the workforce.

These networks also play an important part in training. Training someone means taking the risk of being replaced by him, but a learner who belongs to the same network as his supervisor will do nothing detrimental to him. The management realized that its attempts to get a senior to train a junior not chosen by himself were doomed to failure, but it also noticed that the most skilled workmen surrounded themselves with assistants. The number of assistants ended up by becoming a status symbol: with one assistant you become important, but with two you have no more need to go on working. Hence, the number of assistants had to be kept down, but without doing away with them altogether, so as not to lose the advantage of the new recruits' being taught by the old hands.

This tension between imported industrial methods and local traditions is no doubt the explanation for the factory's fine performance. The French management stands for high and increasing productivity. Meanwhile, the Mexican solidarity networks facilitate productivity, although that is not the reason why they exist. They are quite capable of paralysing production, if they think that serves their interests. The management has been able to win their support by showing itself deeply committed to the success of the firm, whilst at the same time coming to terms with methods of working that are not fully under its control. ■

Terra cotta figurines from Ocotlán, Oaxaca state, Mexico.





THE NATIONAL PARK DILEMMA

BY FRANCE BEQUETTE

NATIONAL parks are universally recognized as places of exceptional beauty and of major importance as regards the flora and fauna that countries are trying to preserve and protect. We should not, however, underestimate the threats to which they are exposed if we want to ward off those threats. The world's first national park, Yellowstone, was created in the western United States in 1872, at the height of the industrial revolution. Today, there are more than 8,500 national parks in 120 countries, totalling about 850 million hectares—almost three times the size of India. In the beginning, these parks, not to be confused with the biosphere reserves UNESCO began designating in 1971, were above all places for leisure and meditation,

Above, Amboseli Park, Kenya.

THE NATIONAL PARK DILEMMA

but they are now tending to become conservation areas. The two purposes are difficult to reconcile, insofar as the ever-growing "smokeless industry" of tourism has a potentially considerable destructive impact. It is also becoming increasingly difficult to find uninhabited areas to protect, as the human population continues to grow and as agriculture, industry and urban development take up more and more space.

A national park, according to the World Conservation Union (IUCN), "contains one or more ecosystems not materially altered by human activity and it contains fauna, flora, geomorphological sites, and habitats of scientific, educational and recreational interest"; it may also contain a natural landscape of great beauty. When creating a park, the authorities must take steps "to prevent or eliminate . . . exploitation or occupation" in the whole area. Visitors are allowed to enter for "educational . . . and recreational purposes". The purposes so defined are much more difficult to implement than it may seem. The first parks were established by coercive means (the "fences and fines" method), but it soon became apparent that no barrier or law could prevent local populations from farming the land, poaching, cutting down trees or even practising slash-and-burn cultivation methods in order to survive. Worse still, how could they allow themselves to be evicted from their land in order to protect the natural environment?

Biscuit Basin in Yellowstone National Park (United States), the world's first protected site, established in 1872.

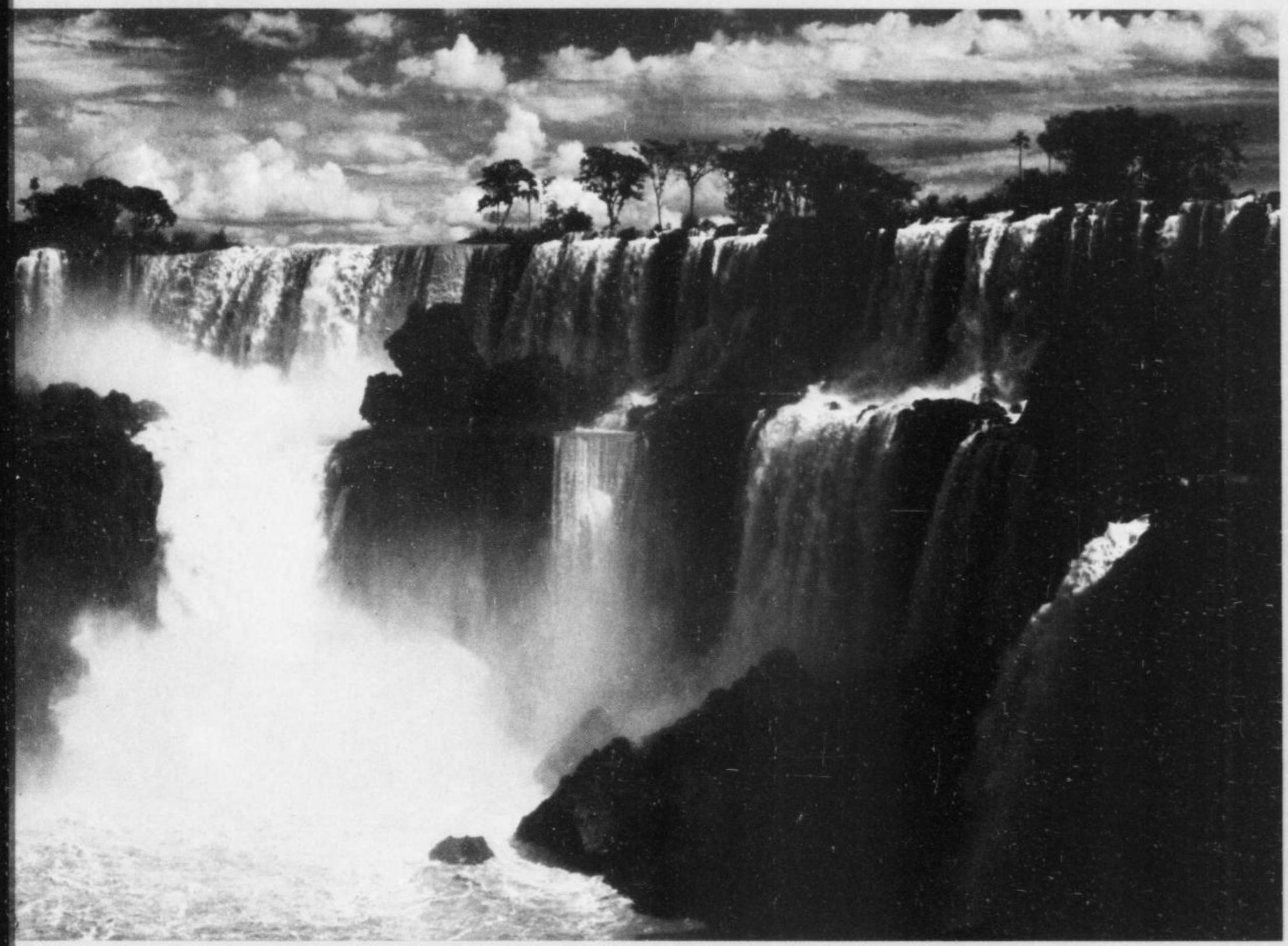
DAMAGE AND DESTRUCTION

Such operations sometimes work well. Brazil's Iguaçu National Park and the Guastopo park in Venezuela were emptied of their inhabitants, and the government compensated and relocated hundreds of families. However, the Brazilian government took the opposite approach in 1961 when it set up the Xingu National Park and moved in seventeen tribes whose land had been confiscated. Some of them took legal action against the government to reclaim their former territories because they could not adapt to the unfamiliar ecosystems. In 1985, after several banana plantations in Costa Rica had been abandoned, 800 unemployed labourers and their families invaded the Corcovado National Park on the Osa Peninsula, and began prospecting for gold, polluting the rivers with sediment and mercury. A court order gave the police powers to evict them after they had been indemnified, but no sooner had they left than other prospectors arrived, setting off armed conflicts. At Khao Yai, Thailand, the creation of a 2,200 km² park led to a bloody battle between wardens and villagers, with fatalities on both sides. Despite strict protection measures, poaching and tree cutting continued, with the result that 5 per cent of the forest has been destroyed and 5 to 10 per cent has suffered damage.

The situation in the parks in the areas of armed conflict in west and central Africa is no better. Gérard Sournia, director of the French branch of IUCN, who has spent many years there, says: "By definition sparsely populated in time of peace, parks and the species that inhabit them can offer, in time of war, many advantages not only to the belligerents but also to the local people, as zones of incursion or safe havens, out-of-the-way battlefields or new sources of supplies and commodities, such as ivory and rhino horn, that can be sold to buy arms, or as land to be used for subsistence farming—there are many claims on their territory". For thirty years, international, civil or tribal wars have been raging in this corner of the world, and parks in Rwanda, Zaire, Niger, Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, Togo and Chad are paying a high price. Animals are scattered during the fighting or gunned down with automatic weapons, as in Zaire's Virunga National Park and the Queen Elizabeth National Park in Uganda. Such disorders, Gérard Sournia stresses, discourage international co-operation and fund-raising efforts. "In Niger," he writes, "and more precisely in the Aïr-Ténéré region, the Tuareg rebellion, the taking of hostages among staff and employees of the reserve (of whom at least two have lost their lives), threats against expatriates and the theft of equipment, especially vehicles, have led IUCN, which heads the project, acting in accord with the funding sources and local authorities, to withdraw its personnel to the capital and suspend the project". To take another example, during the 1960s, over 70 per cent of Uganda's tourist business came from its Murchison Falls Park, and growth rates in tourist spending reached nearly 25 per cent per year, but following Idi Amin's 1971 military coup tourism came to a halt and was even banned two years later. Visitors are returning with the new-found political stability and are helping the economy get back on its feet.

TOURISM'S PROS AND CONS

A remarkable document, *Industry and Environment,* published by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 1992, reveals that "tourism's share of GNP in, for instance, Tunisia is 6 per cent, in Barbados 32 per cent, and in the Maldives 18 per cent". Tourism is a major world industry with an annual investment in capital projects of more than $400 billion, and more than 130 million employees serving over 450 million people travelling internationally, and ten times as many travelling domestically. For some countries, such as Kenya, tourism is the primary source of hard currency. In Amboseli National Park, animals are worth far more alive than dead: American researcher David Western estimates the value of a single lion as a tourist attraction to be $27,000 a year, while an elephant herd may be worth as much as $610,000 per year. On the other hand, the growing number of



The Iguaçu Falls, Brazil.

vehicles tracking cheetahs, a tourist favourite, has become a threat to their existence. Another difficulty is that the land was originally the territory of the pastoral Masai, who are aggrieved that, while their traditional hunting practices have been forbidden, they do not share in tourism's benefits. In Nepal, as the UNEP study points out, "young men have virtually ceased to enter the monasteries . . . to become priests, choosing instead the more lucrative life working in support of trekking and climbing expeditions in the Himalayas". These sherpas invest the money they make in building bigger houses, a threat to forests since they require more firewood to heat, or they buy more livestock, thereby increasing grazing impacts.

The situation is different in developed countries. Some very beautiful parks, victims of their own success, are literally invaded in the holiday season. Every summer, more than 800,000 people visit La Vanoise National Park in the French Alps. Some days, its trails are crowded with thousands of people looking at the flowers and observing the wildlife. Elsewhere, the craze for off-road vehicles—four-wheel drives, all-terrain motorcycles and mountain bikes—is causing irreversible damage to soils. It is not enough to ban them; ways have to be found of enforcing the ban. The problem here is not only one of educating the public, but also of recruiting, training and paying enough wardens. In France, there are between ten and seventy wardens per park, as enthusiastic as they are badly paid. They watch over the park, help scientists with research on the flora and fauna, and provide visitors with information. In some reserves, they are also in charge of buildings that house a system of cameras that allow visitors, for example, to engage in bird-watching without disturbing the birds. In such cases, the park has only one purpose, to protect a natural environment to which humans are not allowed access. In the same vein, some "conservationists" have suggested that parks reduce to between 2 and 3 per cent the area open to the public, and set up a scaled-down reproduction of the parks' most spectacular landscapes outside the parks themselves in order to keep visitors away.

Couldn't we do better? Last December, a meeting was held in the United States, attended by 100 people, mainly U.S. biosphere reserve managers and representatives from various federal and local authorities, to work out a plan of action for the American biosphere reserves. This important initiative will greatly contribute to the strengthening of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, the situation and status of which will be reviewed in March 1995 at a UNESCO-organized conference in Seville. Even though they do not always achieve all they set out to do, these reserves are superior in conception to national parks, since they take the conservation of biodiversity and of ecosystems as their starting point, participate in an international research and management network and, above all, combine environment and development, so safeguarding the quality of life of local populations. ■

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TWO CHIMPS SAY GOODBYE TO THE CIRCUS

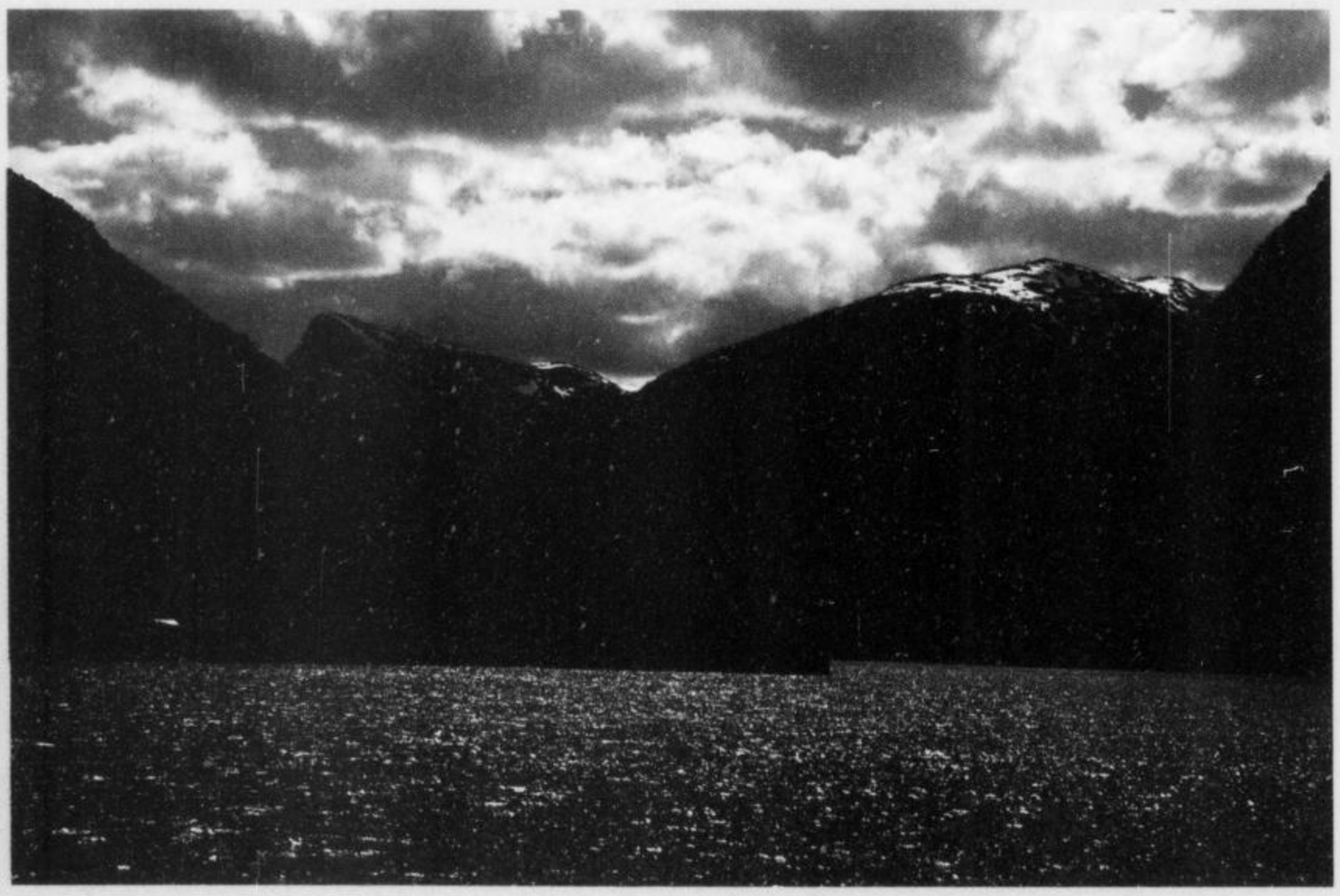
A photographer travelling with a Greek circus who took pictures of children posing with two young female chimpanzees had his animals confiscated in November 1993. Greece joined the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in January 1993, but as it had not yet enacted legislation to implement it, the customs authorities invoked contraband legislation instead. The photographer claimed to have bought the animals in Spain but not to know their country of origin. TRAFFIC, the WWF wildlife trade monitoring programme, undertook to remove the chimps and place them in a rescue centre. As their origin is unknown, they cannot be returned to the wild. ■

TEN GREEN BOTTLES HANGING . . . IN THE WARDROBE

Patagonia, an American outdoor clothing company, has pulled off the feat of producing sweaters from bottles made of PET, the only recyclable plastic. The bottles are washed, chopped into chips, melted down and formed into fibre which is spun into yarn. The garments, perfect for climbers and skiers, are warm, soft and machine-washable, and do not absorb moisture. The material goes by the name of PCR Synchilla fleece (PCR stands for post-consumer recycled). Patagonia is pressing ahead with research into ways of recycling PCR Synchilla itself! ■

SELF-PACKAGED PRODUCTS

UNEP has announced an innovation proposed by a Canadian firm, Bonar, Inc., which has traditionally used multiwall paper and plastic-coated paper bags to ship industrial resins for plastics and rubber manufacturing. Its bright idea has been to make the packaging of the resins from the same or similar resins, which are perfectly suitable for the purpose. This means not only that there is nothing to be thrown away but that the packaging can be tossed, together with the compound it contains, into the manufacturing process. ■



OMAN: DATES AND SARDINES ON THE MENU FOR GOATS

In most of the Gulf States, the Sultanate of Oman in particular, water is in short supply, and the resulting scarcity of forage is the chief obstacle to the development of livestock rearing. Solutions are, however, to hand. According to Oman's Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the country's annual production of sardines is around 25,000 tons, not all of which is consumed by the local population, whilst about 10,000 of the 85,000 tons of dates produced annually are of inferior quality. Both dates and sardines can be used as protein supplements for growing calves and goats. Hopefully, the meat won't taste of sardines. . . . ■

ON THE WATERFRONT

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) last year published a remarkable document that will be of great interest to all those who are concerned with the land-sea interface. It includes ten case studies covering relatively limited geographical areas such as Izmir Bay, Turkey, the Lagoon of Venice, and Lake Geneva, and others that deal with larger areas such as southeast Tasmania and the south coast of the United Kingdom, a whole country (Norway) and an international space (the Baltic Sea). A variety of competing or even conflicting activities are concentrated in coastal zones, including aquaculture, docks and harbours, tourism and recreation, urban and industrial development, quarrying, agriculture and effluent disposal. While not claiming to solve all the problems thus raised, the management methods presented in these studies may be a source of ideas that could be used elsewhere in the world. ■
OECD, 2, rue André Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16. Tel. (33-1) 45 24 80 89; Fax 45 24 85 00.

TUNA CATCH CUTBACKS

The aim of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas is to conserve the fish in the ocean rather than in tins. Delegates at its 1993 meeting agreed to reduce the Western Atlantic tuna catch in 1994 to 1,995 tonnes and in 1995 to 1,200 tonnes, 55 per cent less than the 1991 level. This measure was motivated by the decline in bluefin tuna numbers over the last twenty years, owing to over-fishing. Some experts consider the response too timid, motivated more by economic considerations—the price of the meat and jobs for fishermen—than by concern for the conservation of an endangered species. According to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Japan consumes 40 per cent of the world bluefin catch, purchased mainly from Australia, the United States, Taiwan, Spain and Canada, and a single fish can go for $60,000 at auction. ■

NEWS FROM THE OZONE LAYER

The December 1993 issue of *OzonAction*, the quarterly newsletter of the Industry and Environment Programme Activity Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), reveals that at the beginning of October last "Antarctic ozone levels fell below 100 Dobson units, the lowest daily minimum concentration ever recorded. This represents a 70 per cent reduction as compared to the average concentrations before the ozone hole formed. Over Europe, from December 1992 through March 1993, ozone concentrations have been observed to drop from mean values by an average of 13 per cent." Although the annual growth rate for atmospheric chlorofluorocarbon concentrations has declined in both hemispheres as a result of a 60 per cent reduction in consumption, these concentrations will continue to rise until the turn of the century. ■

UNEP IE/PAC, 39-43, quai André Citroën, 757739 Paris Cedex 15, Tel. (33-1) 44 37 14 74.

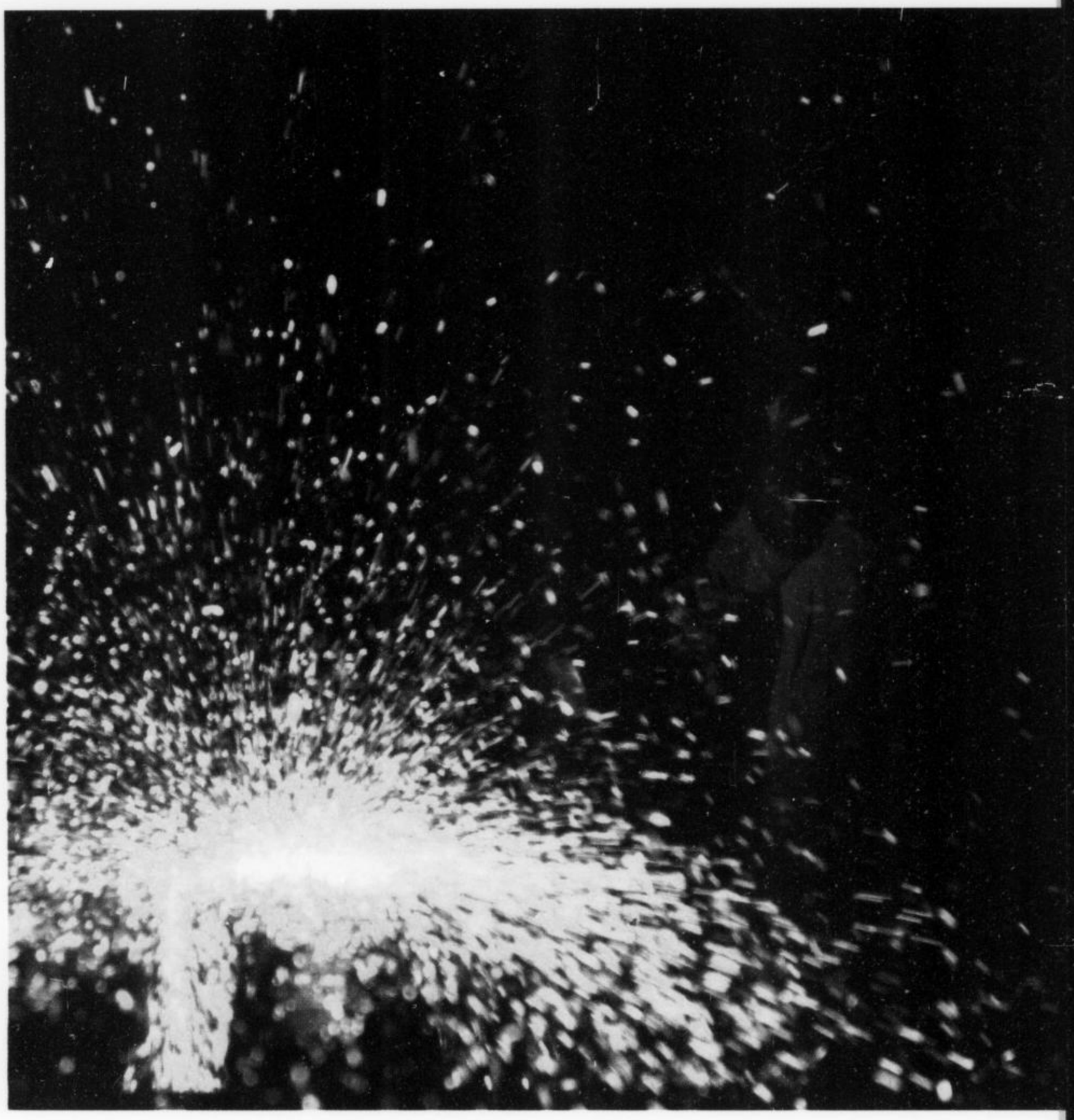
LIFE WITH THE LIONS

LIONS Clubs International only has a distant relationship with the big cat, even though its emblem bears the animal's profile. Lions is the acronym of "Liberty, intelligence, our nation's safety". With the motto "We Serve", Lions is the world's largest service club organization, an association of men and women who give their time to humanitarian causes. More than 40,000 clubs in 175 countries unite 1,600,000 members around an ideal of generosity, openness of heart and mind, and an interest in people, regardless of race or nationality, religion or philosophy. A 37-year-old American insurance man, Melvin Jones, founded the first club in Chicago in 1917. In 1945, he represented the movement at the United Nations. Originally open only to men, the Lions Clubs began acccepting males and females aged 18 to 27 in 1968. In 1975, Lioness Clubs were created exclusively for women. In 1987, the clubs became mixed.

The Lions have been involved in environmental issues since 1970, and in 1982 the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) presented the movement with its "Environment Leadership" medal. Each year the Lions Clubs in France organize seminars on themes such as water, renewable energy sources, waste processing and the detection and monitoring of atmospheric pollution. In 1991, the French branch of Lions Clubs International launched an operation called "2,000 fountains for the year 2000". It aims to list and then restore fountains that were more or less abandoned when piped water was brought to rural areas, in an attempt to revive the tradition in which they served as village meeting places. Already 240 fountains have been restored. In the same year, a project named "A drop of water for Africa" provided a number of waterless Malian villages with water-holes equipped with simple but effective hand-pumps. Also in Mali, in collaboration with a Canadian non-governmental organization, Groupe Action Nord-Sud (GANS), the Lions are promoting out-of-season market gardening on 20 hectares of irrigated land and supplying farmers with ploughs. A plough is ten to twenty times more efficient than a hand-held hoe, but it brings with it the problems of harnessing, feeding draught animals and repair. This change in cultural habits will succeed because it has the full support of the local population.

Lions Clubs were pioneers in developing the use of the white stick and the training of guide dogs for the blind and visually impaired. Currently Lions Clubs International is running a campaign known as SightFirst to combat the problem of blindness worldwide by helping to provide health care services where these are desperately needed. Lions Clubs International is a non-governmental organization which has consultative status with UNESCO and as such attends major conferences as an observer and takes part in certain commissions and working groups. ■

World headquarters: Lions Clubs International, 300 22nd Street/Oak Brook, Illinois 60521-8842, U.S.A. Tel. (708) 571 54 66; Fax 571 88 90.



EASTERN EUROPE ✔

Voices from the past

by Tatjana Globokar

Each nation has its own language, history and ways of working

SINCE the fall of the Berlin Wall, eastern Europe has been overrun by Western businessmen eager to initiate entrepreneurs in the former communist countries into their methods so as to establish dialogue, if not partnership, with them. Well armed with advice and management techniques, they are sometimes welcomed with open arms and sometimes eyed with suspicion, but their message, a simple one, is always the same: for more than forty years you have been running your businesses without having to face competition or reckon with market forces, and we're here to let you into the secrets of competitivity. Whether they are German, French, British or Italian, they set up more and more joint ventures, consultancies and business schools. There are a few surprises in store for them along the way.

More differences than meet the eye

There are surprises on both sides. Western businessmen realize that, contrary to the stereotyped image they have of the command economy—laggardly decision-making processes, inefficiency in the workplace, buck-passing and the rest—there are marked differences from country to country. It was convenient, between 1945 and 1990, to lump the whole of eastern Europe from

the Baltic to the Black Sea together as a monolithic bloc, all ruled over in the same way by socialist regimes. Nobody took much notice of the fact that the peoples of the Iron Curtain countries were quite different one from another, and had their own cultural identities that inevitably influenced management styles.

Meanwhile, east European entrepreneurs were surprised to find, in their dealings with Westerners, that the efficiency, consistency and speed of decision-making that were the proud hallmarks of Western business were sometimes conspicuous for their absence, and that those dealings could be more or less easy, depending on where their partners came from.

The rapprochement that has followed the breakup of the eastern bloc has, if nothing else, taught those on either side that each nation has its own language, history and traditions but also its own way of working. There is, however, a danger that these differing characteristics will again be smothered, in the countries of eastern Europe, under management methods copied from the West. They should be studied systematically so that they can be integrated into the local business context.

Between 1985 and 1992, we were able to carry out research in this field in Poland, Hungary, Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. This research brought to light some widely differing behaviour patterns and value systems linked with the history of each of these countries.

A foundry at Nowa Huta in the suburbs of Krakow, the site of Poland's largest iron and steel industry complex.

Idealism and pragmatism

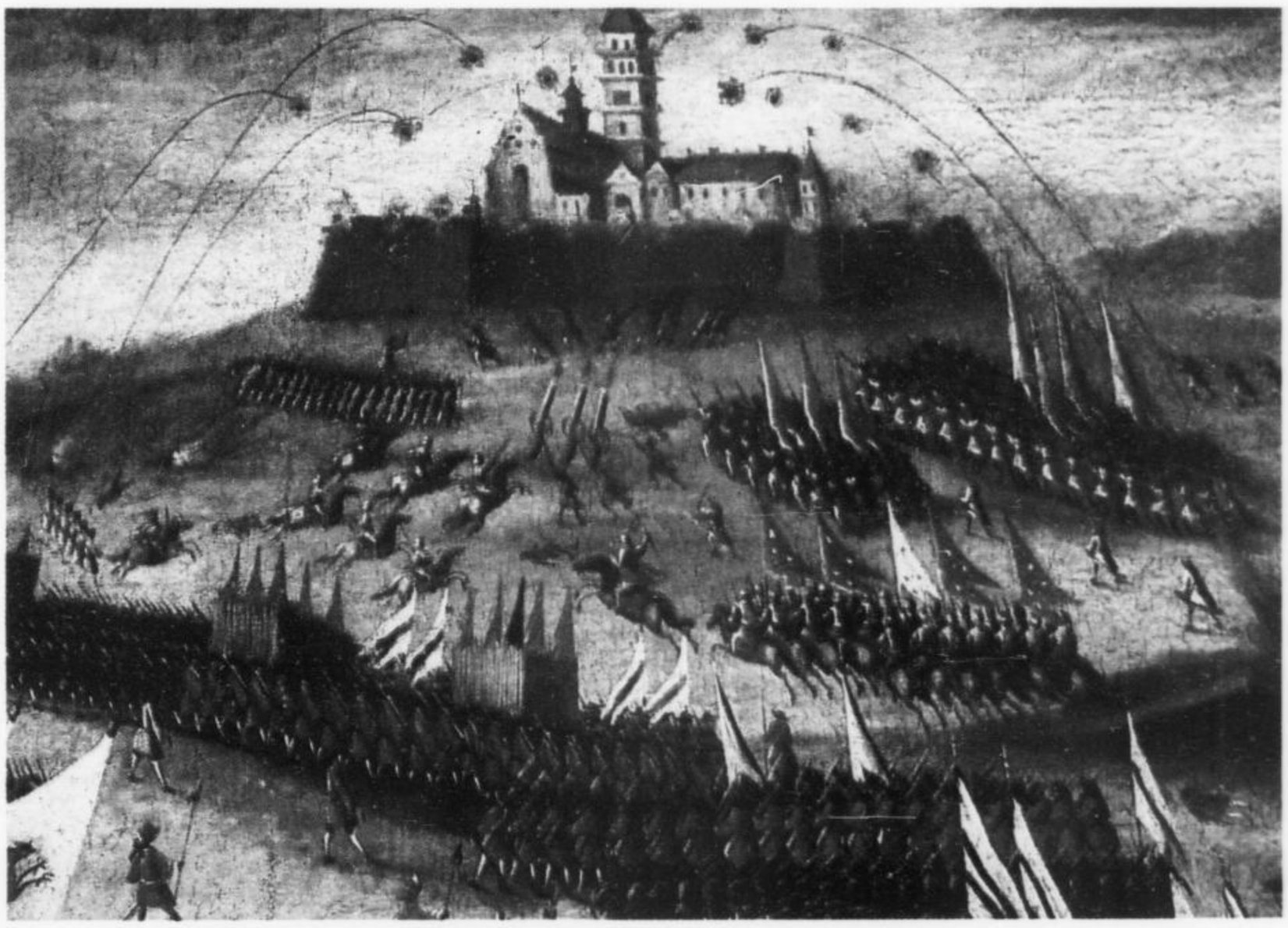
"To work in peace, I have to know that the manager likes me," an overseer in a Polish factory told us. We were at first surprised at such an emotionally loaded attitude to relationships in the workplace, but found it fully understandable once it was set against the general background of the enterprise.

Our interviewee expressed a strong need for trust and for constant reassurance as to his superior's feelings towards him. From other clues we came to the conclusion that the bonds of solidarity between the workers in the factory were similar to the bonds of comradeship so much in evidence between the soldiers on the many battlefields of Poland's stormy past.

Because of this solidarity, patriotic feelings far removed from everyday realities are involved in attitudes to work. Those we interviewed laid little emphasis on the job in hand or the factory's performance but placed great emphasis on the importance they attached to Poland's prosperity and glory. "Poles are stirred by anything to do with the homeland," as A. Podgorecki confirms in *Une théorie de la société polonaise* (1991).

The motivations of Hungarian workers, on the other hand, are simpler and more pragmatic. In the factory we investigated, individual ambitions are subordinated to the cohesion of the group. A good worker, in the eyes of the supervisor, is one who is unassuming, talks little and does his workmates' jobs for them, an attitude viewed as desirable and indeed necessary inasmuch as it serves the higher interest of the group.

The group in question may be a production unit, a department of the administration or a maintenance service. Its cohesion is seamless, and it tries to solve its problems without "outside" interference. Although such loyalty is not



The siege of Czestochowa by the Swedes in 1655 is pictured in this late 17th-century painting by a folk artist. The siege ended in victory for the Poles.

Peasants of Swabian descent in the Banat, Hungary, are shown in this early 20th-century postcard.

necessarily reflected in a feeling of belonging vis-à-vis the enterprise, it does on the other hand give rise to keen competititon between the different groups, each of which wants to outdo the others.

The roots of this attitude go back into the past of a society that is a patchwork of peoples and religions, obliged by a hostile environment to turn inwards upon itself, coalescing in feudal times around the local gentry. In a context of such ethnic and religious diversity, community spirit was the glue that held society together.

Family and village communities

We observed similar, albeit more individualistic, attitudes in a Slovene factory, The emphasis here was on know-how, which seemed to be the one and only criterion for accepting and tolerating other people. "We get on well with this foreman. He's always been in the ironworks. At least he knows his stuff", we were told by a workman, while the foreman in question told us he always listens to the workman because "who knows the job better than him?"

We built up from this a picture of Slovene-style management under which the workers can develop their skills if they are placed in an atmosphere of collective mutual aid. The strong concern for equality that permeates their relationships with each other gives them a feeling of dignity and trust. In organizational terms, this is reflected in a negative attitude towards excessively hierarchical structures and a positive one towards internal communication, enabling everyone to have his say and prove his point.

The reason why Slovenes set such store by equality, mutual aid and competence is that the basis of their society is the village community. When Slovenia was occupied territory, the possibilities for climbing the social ladder were very limited outside of that community. The community thus favoured equality and solidarity among its members, whose only way of making their mark was by means of their skills.

As our experience in Slovenia had confirmed the part played by different cultures in former Yugoslavia, we turned our attention to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In this country inhabited by Bosnian Muslims, Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs, the influence of the "*zadruga*" model of social organization is still strongly felt. The *zadruga* itself, the traditional extended family of the Balkans where the sons lived and worked together under the authority of the father, has all but disappeared but is still very much a part of the mental landscape. The two focal points are the father and the brothers. The father is the chief incarnate, whose duty it is to protect the family community and dedicate himself to its welfare. The brothers represent the submission of individuals to the group, which is bonded together by strong feelings of solidarity.

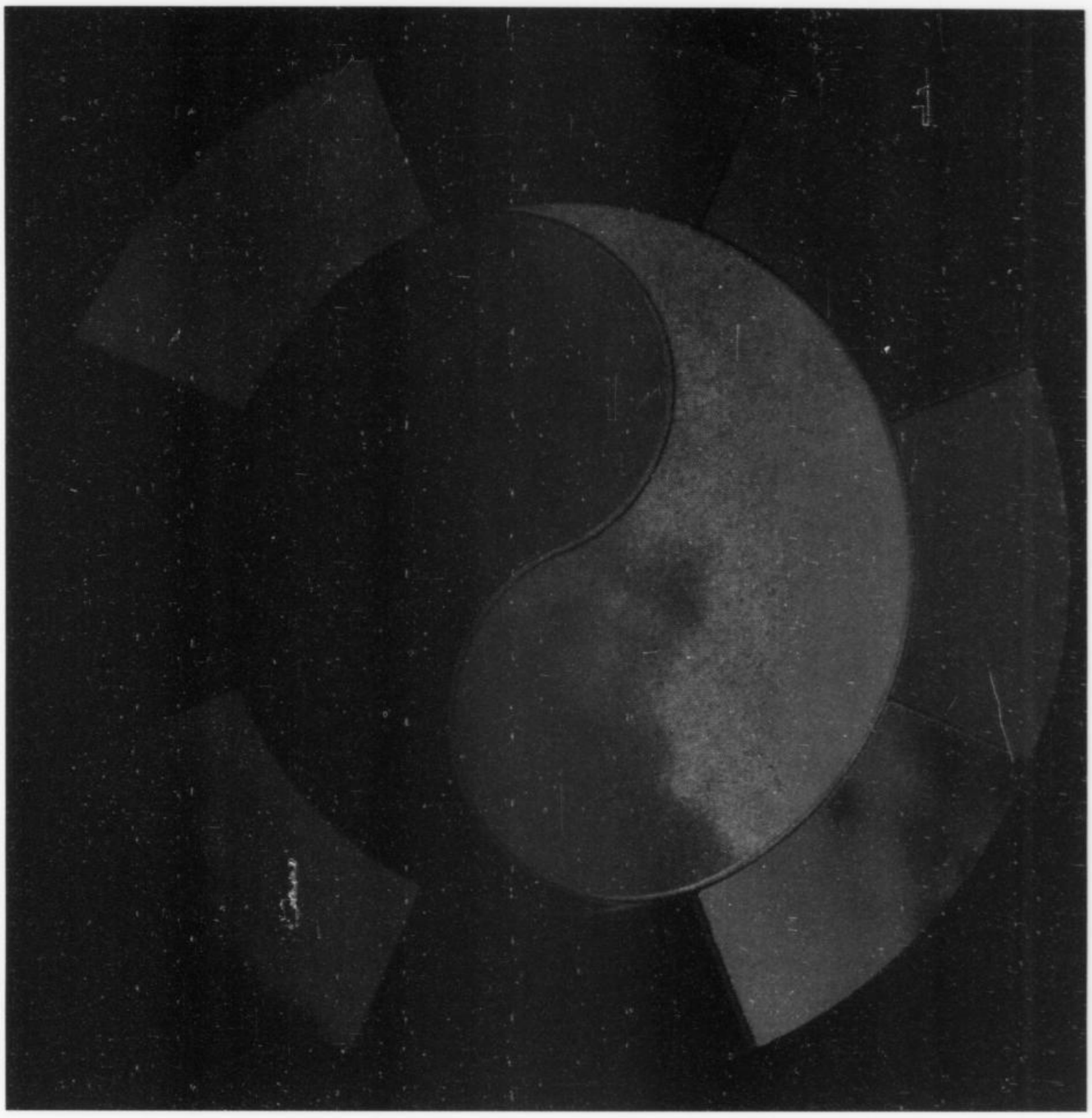
This family hierarchy appeared to influence the two-way relationships in the factory we researched, the higher echelons exercising paternal authority and the workers practising fraternal solidarity. Superiors took on the role of the all-powerful, protective but also well-beloved father, a role their subordinates were content to let them play. The "chief", of whatever rank, is the one who knows everything, anticipates everything and is also prepared to listen to everyone. On the shop floor, on the other hand, where an egalitarian spirit reigns, relations among the workers are characterized by familiarity and spontaneous co-operation. The expressions "our factory", "our house" and "our family" cropped up continuously in interviews. Each member of this "family" had a specified role and his ambitions in working life were integrated into the collective endeavour.

What are the lessons for management?

This brief overview of the distinctive features of certain countries of eastern and central Europe clearly shows that modern management requires a thorough knowledge of the employee's cultural and social background. As of now, the managers and management consultants who get the best results are those who display the ability to look, listen and act on intuition: it is useful to know that unduly hierarchical structures should not be imposed in countries where the community spirit predominates and that individualism should not be accorded preferential treatment in those where the individual willingly takes a back seat—not only so as to avoid conflicts but also to help give full scope to the abilities of each individual as part of the common endeavour. ■

TATJANA GLOBOKAR,
a Slovenian-born economist, is a research associate with France's National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS). She is the author of many studies on the economies of east and central European countries.

'Most successful Japanese businessmen have the skills of the samurai in the sense that they are never afraid to take difficult decisions and do not flinch from bad news'



JAPAN ✓

The new samurai

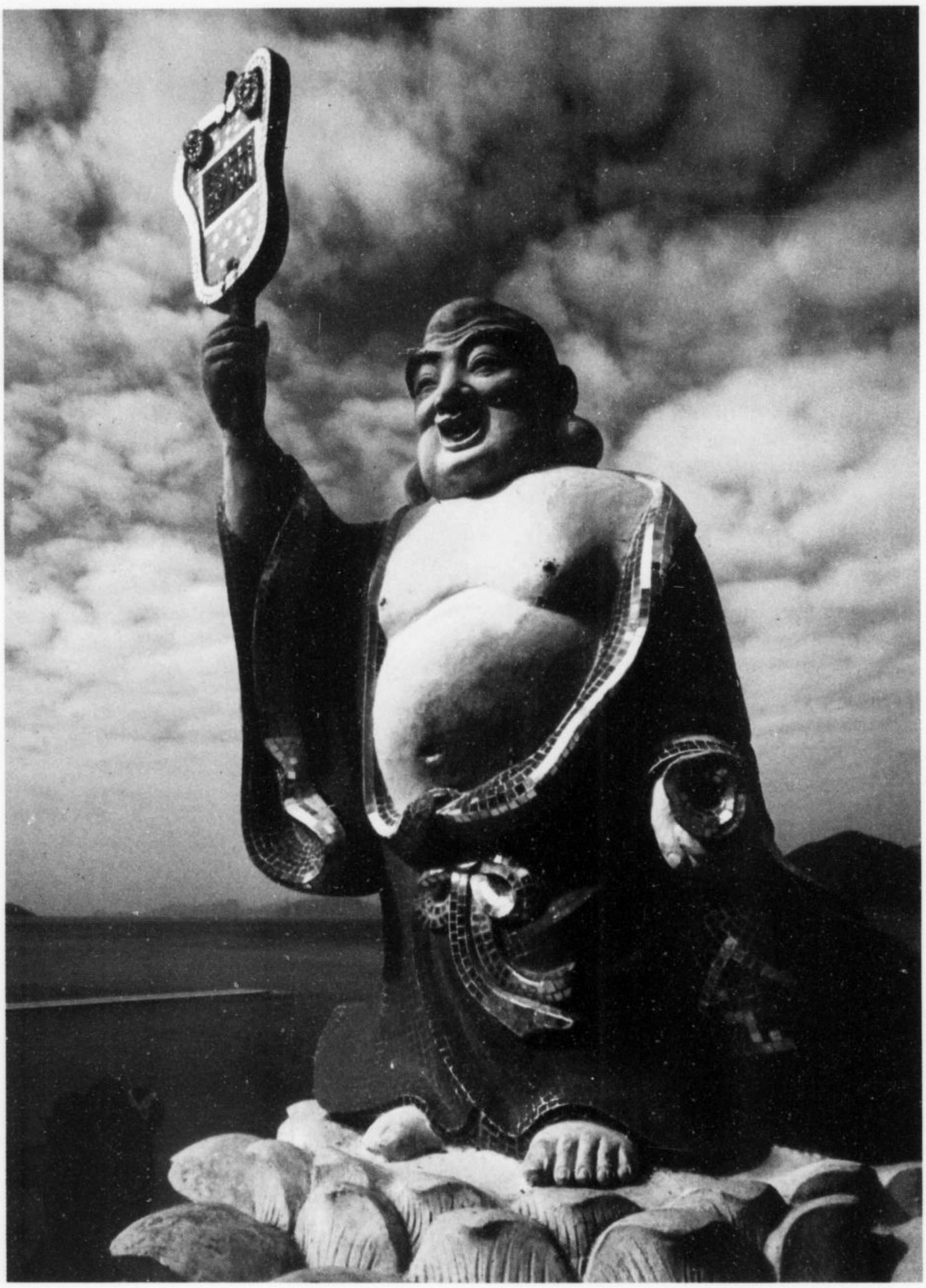
by John Harford

Above, a computer-generated image of Yin and Yang

HOW is it that a relatively small island country with hardly any natural resources has become such a powerful force in world trade? One simple story tells everything. In 1952 the small Japanese company that was eventually to become Sony Corporation struck a deal with Bell Labs of the United States for the production of transistors. The American company's last words of advice were, "Whatever you do, do not try to use transistors in radio sets; they cannot accept the electrical frequencies required."

Later, having solved the frequency problem, and thus helped to launch the transistor revolution, the Japanese company set itself the objective of producing a miniature radio that would fit into a shirt pocket. Unfortunately the designers were unsuccessful in producing a model that was quite small enough, and so all the members of the sales force were issued with shirts with extra wide pockets.

The sense of purpose illustrated by this story is one of the outstanding features of Japanese business practice. It is based on qualities that are simple to describe in words but very difficult to put into practice. The qualities are respect, trust, loyalty, courage, practicality, solidity, substance, simplicity, brevity, calmness, tolerance, patience, perseverance, clarity and wisdom. To understand their place in Japanese business one has to go much deeper than studying such outward manifestations of social behaviour as politeness, deference and courtesy. These are only external reflections from a deep pool. One needs to look at the



Effigy of the Buddha on Repulse Bay, Hong Kong.

whole context of Japanese culture, which has grown and been influenced for centuries by a number of concepts, philosophies and religions.

Some of the most significant of these influences came from China via Taoism, Confucianism and Chan (Zen) Buddhism. The written language of Japan also came originally from China, as did Japanese medicine and military tactics, and many philosophical concepts. One good example of this influence is the Japanese adoption of the Chinese character system. There are literally thousands of calligraphic symbols in the average Japanese daily newspaper. (To read a paper it is necessary to know about 2,000 characters). The ability to perform this incredible feat of recognition and mental storage is developed by the repetitive practice of writing characters from a very early age. By the time a child is four, in some cases even younger, he or she will have absorbed the skills of patience, perseverance, endurance and the "work ethic"—four of the most potent attributes of successful management.

The universe and the individual

The Japanese regard individuals as a microcosm of the universe and as irrevocably bound

to changes which continually occur. This puts humankind firmly in its place in the order of things. Most of them understand the concept of harmonizing and not conflicting with natural events. The idea of change is indicated by the concept of Yin-Yang, the mutual interaction of positive and negative forces which not only oppose each other but also mutually support each other. The Japanese believe a balance between Yin and Yang forces must be continually sought in all matters. The saying that "the only thing that is constant is change" is an everyday reminder that one should always be taking corrective action to retain one's balance.

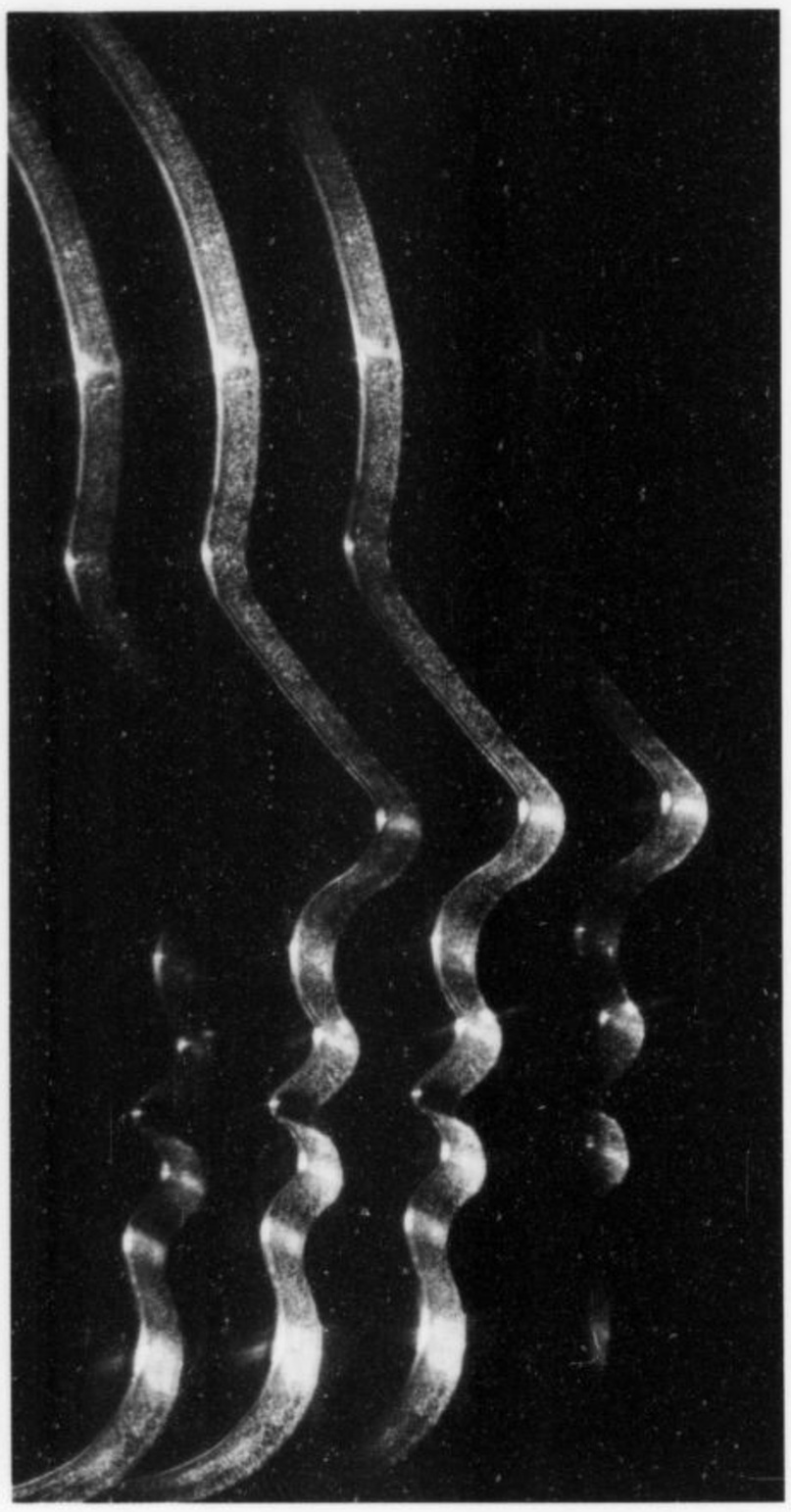
The concept of Yin and Yang can be seen in the fluctuations between night and day, male and female, hot and cold, dark and light. Its importance in business forecasting and planning rests on the belief that changes or events can be predicted in advance to the extent that a sudden increase in Yang will be immediately followed by a rapid descent to extreme Yin and vice versa. In other words, if corrective action is not taken quickly, disaster will follow. When changes occur too rapidly in nature, thunderstorms, earthquakes and flooding result. Parallel situations arise in business if things are done in a precipitate manner. Accordingly business planning in Japan takes into account the advisability of introducing change slowly and harmoniously.

Planning and ritual

The exploratory process that is carried out before embarking on a business project can be likened to rituals that are associated with preparing land for sowing and date back to ancient times. The ground must be fertile, the seeds (ideas) must be of good quality and must be placed at the right spacing and depth so as not to interfere with each other. The ground must be well drained and irrigated if necessary, and weeds must be discouraged.

Plans are based on an idea or ideas. In Japan ideas are allowed to sprout naturally into maturity, and since they are taken seriously they are subject to quality control, like any other product! When the Japanese have an idea they do not go around telling everyone about it, they put it aside mentally and allow it to mature. This process is called pondering, or searching for perfect clarity, literally waiting for the mud to settle down. The idea is then looked at by a group, whose members take the concept away as individuals and apply the pondering process themselves. This process may be repeated many times before the group agrees that the concept is viable, for a plan is constructed like a pyramid built in wafer-thin layers, the thinner the better. No new layer is added until the previous one has set hard. The bottom layers receive input from all members of the group, and the final

Japanese managers take part in a rigorous training course at Fuji Nomiya, 100 km from Tokyo.



layer represents the approval and go-ahead from the chief executive or board of the company. This process exercises the skill of patience: "With a light top and heavy bottom, solidity and inspiration are present and success is guaranteed." The group pondering method is used extensively for solving problems. It is very effective for optimizing human resources and means that doing things in a fit of enthusiasm is avoided.

Dealing with difficult problems

The key to dealing with difficult problems in Japanese eyes is *Ki*, "internal strength". In ancient Japan survival meant avoiding imminent death at the hands of a warlord by developing martial and military skills and belonging to a group. Professional soldiers or samurai acted as protectors to the group, who paid the samurai's salaries. The samurai had a strict code of honour and conduct and were impervious to suffering and hardship; they also had to be masters of strategy and tactics. Only men of iron resolution, outstanding courage and strength could withstand the training. The one skill that was paramount was calmness under pressure. The development of principles requiring these qualities and involving mental, physical and spiritual toughness and the will to succeed is at the heart of management training in Japanese companies today. This "whole person training" is carried out in addition to learning the skills and techniques of business management. Thus most successful Japanese businessmen have the skills of the samurai in the sense that they are never afraid to take difficult decisions and do not flinch from bad news.

The belly

If you look at any representation of a Buddha or a Japanese warrior, you will see that they both have a well-developed belly. The belly in Japanese is called the *Hara*, and traditionally training the *Hara* has been an important activity for many Japanese. It is of fundamental importance to anyone wishing to accomplish great things. "A man without a developed *Hara* will not aspire to greatness" is a common Japanese saying.

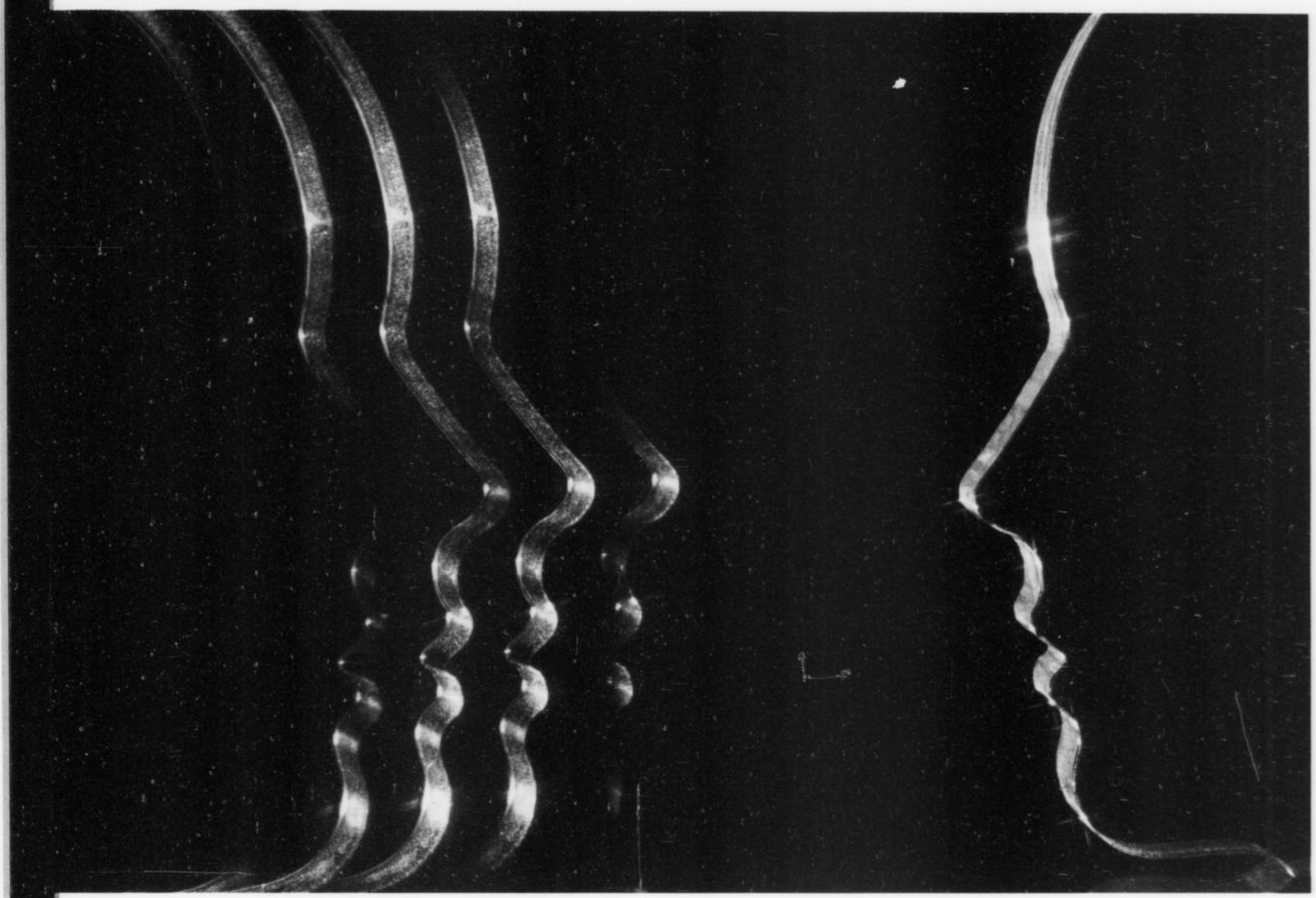
The *Hara* represents the "seat of life and vitality". In Japanese medicine the internal organs and the energy associated with them form part of the mental process as well: "To think only with the head is considered insubstantial." The Japanese word for a plan, *Fukian*, literally means "belly project", thus implying that there must be heart in the plan as well as purely intellectual content. Traditionally, the strength of the *Hara* is developed by sitting or standing, coupled with deep abdominal breathing and strong mental concentration. This causes the *Ki* or life force energy to grow and hence increases the power to get things done. Strong *Ki* is evident in Judo, Karate, Kendo, archery, sword drawing, the tea ceremony, flower arranging, meditation—and successful businessmen!

The concept of *Ki* is baffling to most occidentals. It cannot be seen, heard or smelled, and therefore it is not amenable to normal methods of reasoning or study. An appreciation of *Ki* can be achieved by working with an accomplished teacher, by doing and feeling things under close supervision. The irony is that *Ki*, the most important driving force in any kind of activity, is an imponderable, but its reality is readily accepted in the East. Perhaps the term "inner strength" could make it understandable to occidentals. No movement or activity can occur without the consumption of *Ki* energy.

The quest for balance

Enlightened Japanese managers understand the need to avoid excess and the need for balance and restraint to avoid illness caused by psychological disturbances or imbalances. Their approach is based on the belief, central to Japanese traditional medicine (which is itself based on traditional Chinese medicine) that the physical, mental and spiritual aspects of any disease or illness cannot be separated from one another in diagnosis or treatment. The patient must be treated holistically.

JOHN HARFORD
is a British engineer and management consultant who has first-hand knowledge of Japanese management and business methods, on which he has lectured widely. He is a registered practitioner of Chinese medicine.



Two of the most important features of Japanese medicine and culture are the Yin-Yang theory, described above, and the Laws of the Five Elements. In simple terms, if your Yin and Yang energies are not balanced you are sick and it is the doctor's job to create a balance. According to the Laws of the Five Elements, all human beings are made up of a combination of five elements (or tendencies): wood, fire, earth, metal and water. The five elements are in turn related to the internal organs, the emotions, colours, smells, tastes and the seasons. In business terms they are concerned with helping in staff selection, creating effective organizations, creating a harmonious working environment and reducing stress and tension generally.

Element	Organs	Emotion
Fire	**Heart**	**Joy**
Earth	**Spleen**	**Sympathy**
Metal	**Lungs**	**Sadness**
Water	**Kidneys**	**Fear**
Wood	**Liver**	**Anger**

Training and leadership

Business training methods in Japan are practical and follow a traditional pattern. Trainers are highly respected for their skills and trainees are expected to pay full attention at all times. The responsibilities are mutual: the teacher gives out what the student needs, and the student absorbs. Each party must be humble and respect the other. The training of young managers is similar to martial art or military training. The emphasis is on doing real things rather than debating or attending lectures or "business games".

It is not normal for graduates to go straight into management. When they join a company they are usually assigned to a very experienced mentor with specialized skills. Usually three or more graduates will work in a single office for up to three years, during which time they are given tasks to accomplish under guidance from the mentor. The system of training is akin to a "drip feed", which means that substantial skills are acquired slowly and organically.

The Western world could learn much from what makes the Japanese so successful in business. It is not just a case of adopting Japanese techniques and technology but of recognizing and developing the necessary human skills. Such a process would take time, but the qualities and attributes can be learned by exercising determination and constantly keeping an open and flexible mind. The East has borrowed heavily from the West in improving its business performance; the West could also take note of the lessons of Japanese history and culture and consider applying them in its own organizations. ■

UNESCO IN ACTION
NEWSBRIEFS...

MOTHER TERESA HONOURED

The Director-General of UNESCO travelled to Calcutta to present Mother Teresa with the 1992 UNESCO Prize for Peace Education, awarded to her by an international jury "in recognition of the achievements of a life entirely dedicated to serving the poor, promoting peace and fighting injustice". Accepting the award, Mother Teresa said that works of love are works of peace and that it is important to pray, because the fruit of prayer is "the deepening of faith and of love". She announced that the $50,000 prize money, donated by the Japan Shipbuilding Industry Foundation, would be used to build an extension to the Nirmala Kennedy Centre, a home for the handicapped she runs in Calcutta. The award for 1993 was shared by Madeleine de Vits (Belgium) and the Graduate Institute of Peace Studies (Republic of Korea).

MODERNIZING THE HERMITAGE MUSEUM

The Government of the Netherlands is putting $1.2 million towards the cost of a project for the development of the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg (Russia). The project, part of UNESCO's Programme for Central and Eastern European Development (PROCEED), aims to improve the museum's lighting, labelling, computerization and marketing, and also includes the training of professionals.

FIRST JAPANESE SITES CHOSEN FOR HERITAGE LIST

For the first time, a number of Japanese sites—Himeji-jo Castle and the Buddhist monuments in the Horyu-Ji area and the Yakushima and Shirakami-Sanchi natural sites—have been placed on UNESCO's World Heritage List. Together with 29 other sites chosen by the World Heritage Committee meeting in Cartagena (Colombia) last December, this brings to 411 the number of sites, in 94 countries, listed as being of outstanding natural or cultural value.

OPERATION BOSNIA

The first UNESCO school in Bosnia and Herzegovina was inaugurated on 30 January under the Organization's "Operation Bosnia" programme. It stands on a hilltop overlooking the town of Grude, opposite a site where the French humanitarian organization "Médecins sans frontières" is building a village for refugees from the Mostar region. It will enable several hundred children to go back to school after a two-year break in their studies. The school has four large classrooms, a library and a playground. Two more schools will be built soon, in Nevesinje and Kalesija.

WOMEN IN THE MEDIA

UNESCO is setting up a network for the development of women media specialists in the Mediterranean Arab countries, linking universities and training institutes in three European countries (Belgium, France and the Netherlands) and four Mediterranean countries (Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia). The project aims to strengthen media initiatives involving Mediterranean Arab women, promote international research and define communication strategies that would help to change attitudes towards and perceptions of women in general and Arab women in particular. The European Union has approved financial support for the project under its MED-MEDIA programme, recently created to promote co-operation among media professionals and reduce prejudice and ignorance over such issues as the Middle East conflict, immigration and racism.

HELPING FORMER YUGOSLAVIA'S FREE PRESS

An extra $20,000 has been granted by UNESCO's Director-General to the Sarajevo daily *Oslobodenje*. This supplements the $50,000 already provided by the Organization under its priority programme to help the independent media in the former Yugoslavia, an activity conducted in collaboration with professional media organizations, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations. If you would like to offer your support, please ring UNESCO on (33-1) 45 68 42 13. ■

THIS ARTICLE IS ONE OF A SERIES IN WHICH THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF UNESCO SETS OUT HIS THINKING ON MATTERS OF CURRENT CONCERN

COMMENTARY BY FEDERICO MAYOR

Preventing pollution

WATER, soil and air pollution is a worldwide problem. We cannot go on taking a piecemeal view of the preservation of our heritage. We must adopt worldwide rules of conduct. A situation in which one country takes appropriate action while its neighbour does the opposite cannot be tolerated. Some countries are much worse polluters than others, and it is they who should foot most of the bill.

The industrialized countries are at present responsible for between 70 and 85 per cent of all pollution and its disastrous effects on the world's cultural heritage. Although they have a much larger population, the developing countries account for far fewer of the sources of pollution and contribute less to environmental degradation. How can countries that cannot afford to do so be asked to behave as the industrialized countries themselves have failed to behave? Take deforestation, for example. In the North memories should not be so short that people forget how, for centuries, they have been devastating their forests. Instead of laying down the law to others they should be helping them to adopt rules of conduct better than theirs have been in the past.

Like natural disasters, man-made catastrophes know no frontiers. There have been many episodes in history as sombre as the eruption of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines. That volcano gave off as many toxic substances in a day as the burning oil wells in Kuwait gave off in a year. The difference, however, is that there was nothing we could do to prevent the Pinatubo eruption, but we were perfectly capable of averting the Kuwaiti oil well fires, and should have done so. These were examples of, on the one hand, an unavoidable disaster and, on the other, of a problem that was remediable because it was the work of human hands.

A moral duty

Prevention is a duty demanded of us by something much more than cultural, economic or political considerations. As in the case of preventive measures in the field of health, it is our moral duty. If we want to preserve the health of our planet and of its cultural monuments in particular, we should take all the preventive steps our resources allow. The resources we now have at our disposal are considerable—those, for instance, provided by satellite-based remote sensing, which covers the whole world. To find out whether monuments in Iraq had suffered war damage, there was no need to send a fact-finding mission; we had only to examine the photographs accumulated day by day in two or three world centres.

We therefore have the technical means to ensure that international standards are respected, and to avoid pollution that is mainly attributable to the activities of 18 to 22 per cent of humanity, by which I mean that highly privileged fraction of the world's population whose appetite for creature comforts and gadgets, so characteristic of the consumer society, needs to be curbed and corrected.

Respect for future generations is now a moral duty. It is the supreme concern of such people as Captain Cousteau, who has for so many years been opening our eyes to the wonders of nature and who is now sounding the alarm, alerting us to the fact that we are in the process of destroying the seas, the very lungs of the planet. As we all know, there is no life without light, but it is precisely at the interface between the waters and the dry land that we are destroying ecosystems by dumping huge quantities of toxic products. The great threat now hanging over the human race is the human race itself. ■

UNESCO IN ACTION
HERITAGE

THE VALLÉE DE MAI

THE granitic islands of the Seychelles archipelago, rising from a large submarine plateau that may have been the legendary land of Lemuria, are like great hanging gardens. Forming, so to speak, a "microcontinent" of their own, they bear little resemblance to the other islands, volcanic or coralline, of the Indian Ocean. They are distinctive in other respects too: one of them, Praslin, is home to an astonishing native species of palm, the famous coco-de-mer.

Two hundred years ago, these as yet virgin islands were covered in vast, tropically luxuriant rainforests that filled the ravines and valleys and clambered up hills and mountains.

In the lowlands, up to an altitude of 300 metres, grew giant trees more than 30 metres tall and with boles of 15 to 20 metres in diameter, and even they were dwarfed by the superb Dipterocarpaceae, as much as 65 metres tall.

Between the altitudes of 300 and 600 metres was intermediate forest that formed a canopy only twenty or so metres above the ground but was very rich in endemic species. Huge bare boulders emerging like islets from a sea of greenery provided a habitat for interesting communities of ferns and of orchids, including the *paille-en-queue* with its gorgeous spray of mother-of-pearl flowers and delicious gardenia-like scent.

On the mist-shrouded heights, the trees grew to no more than 15 metres, but it was here that the pitcher plant or Nepenthes was to be found, usually winding itself around a species of mangrove tree that also grew there.

These ancient forests, with their botanical links to Africa, Madagascar, India and Malaysia, were largely replaced by plantations, leaving only a few precious vestiges on the mountain tops of Mahé and Silhouette Islands. A few of the smaller islands such as Praslin provide the last natural sanctuaries for the coco-de-mer.

A LIVING MUSEUM

The Vallée de Mai Nature Reserve is perhaps the most attractive and interesting of these sanctuaries. It is easily accessible by means of the well-surfaced road linking the villages of la Grand'Anse and la Baie Sainte-Anne. As it is only some 18 hectares in area, it takes only an hour to walk the length of the path that runs round it. The low hill overlooking it affords a superb all-round view. Its shady groves of palm and pandanus give the visitor some idea of how beautiful the woodlands of Praslin must once have been.

The Vallée de Mai is an outstanding reminder of what the world's flora was like at an earlier stage, a kind of living museum. Much too small to survive on its own, it owes its continued existence to human intervention. It is thus both a fine example of rational management of the environment and a conservation area for rare and interesting botanical species. These include the *bois rouge* (red wood), a large-leaved tree of the Dilleniaceae family so called for its brightly coloured trunk; the *capucin*, a sapotaceous plant whose large seed resembles a hooded head; the *latanier latte*, a palm with large, stiff, dark green fronds; the *palmiste*, perhaps the handsomest of Seychellean palms; and two species of pandanus, the *vacoa parasol* with its perfectly symmetrical triple branches, and the *vacoa marron* with its astounding aerial prop roots, sometimes over 30 metres in length.

As if to make up for the solemn immobility of its trees, the forest swarms with animal life: emerald-green geckos, big dark-brown snails of the primitive Acavideae family, big, black but reputedly harmless scorpions, lovely shimmering snakes, little "tiger chameleons", tawny-breasted bats, big-billed bulbuls, charming *souï-mangas*, red, white or blue fruit-eating pigeons, and the little *vasa* parrots whose clear, strong whistling call shatters the silence of the valley in the early morning and late afternoon.

Indisputably, however, it is the 4,000 coco-de-mer palms, a unique population

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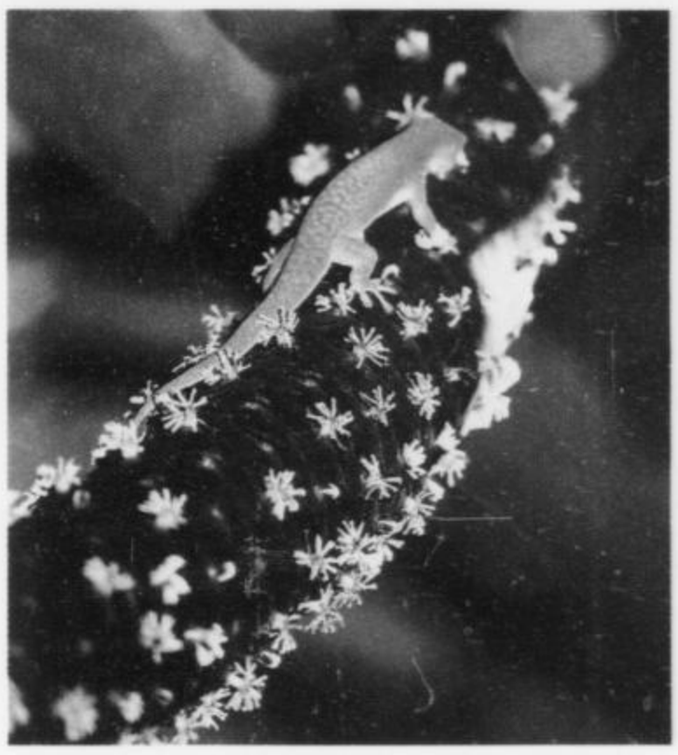
A paradise garden in the Seychelles

by Guy Lionnet

Air view of the Vallée de Mai.



Above, a *Phelsuma*, a small arboreal gecko found in the islands of the Indian Ocean. Top, a *Vanigula seychellensis*, a gastropod native to the Vallée de Mai.

of trees whose splendour rivals that of the cedars of Lebanon or the giant redwoods of California, that make the Vallée de Mai one of the botanical wonders of the world.

THE LOVE-LIFE OF THE COCO-DE-MER

Lodoicea sechellarum, the coco-de-mer, is one of the six species of palm native to the Seychelles. With its straight, bare trunk, its fans of large, stiff fronds and its huge fruits, it is a truly majestic tree.

Like all members of the Borasseae family, it is dioecious, i.e. the male and female reproductive organs, stamen and pistil, grow on separate plants; the male and female palms stand side by side like a loving couple. Unable to live one without the other, the two sexes are similarly proportioned. There are several surprising things about them. The male is about five metres taller than the female and appears to be protecting her; its stamen resembles a large penis. Under the smooth, shiny epidermis of the fruit, a huge, green, heart-shaped object some 50 cm. long and weighing 15 to 20 kg., the nut itself—the "sea coconut", the biggest and heaviest seed in the vegetable kingdom—consists of two grey-black lobes, covered in a very tough integument and with a narrow groove between them, recalling a smoothly rounded pair of female buttocks. According to an old Seychelles legend, on wild stormy nights the coco-de-mer palms consummate their union in a strange ceremony to witness which spells death to humans.

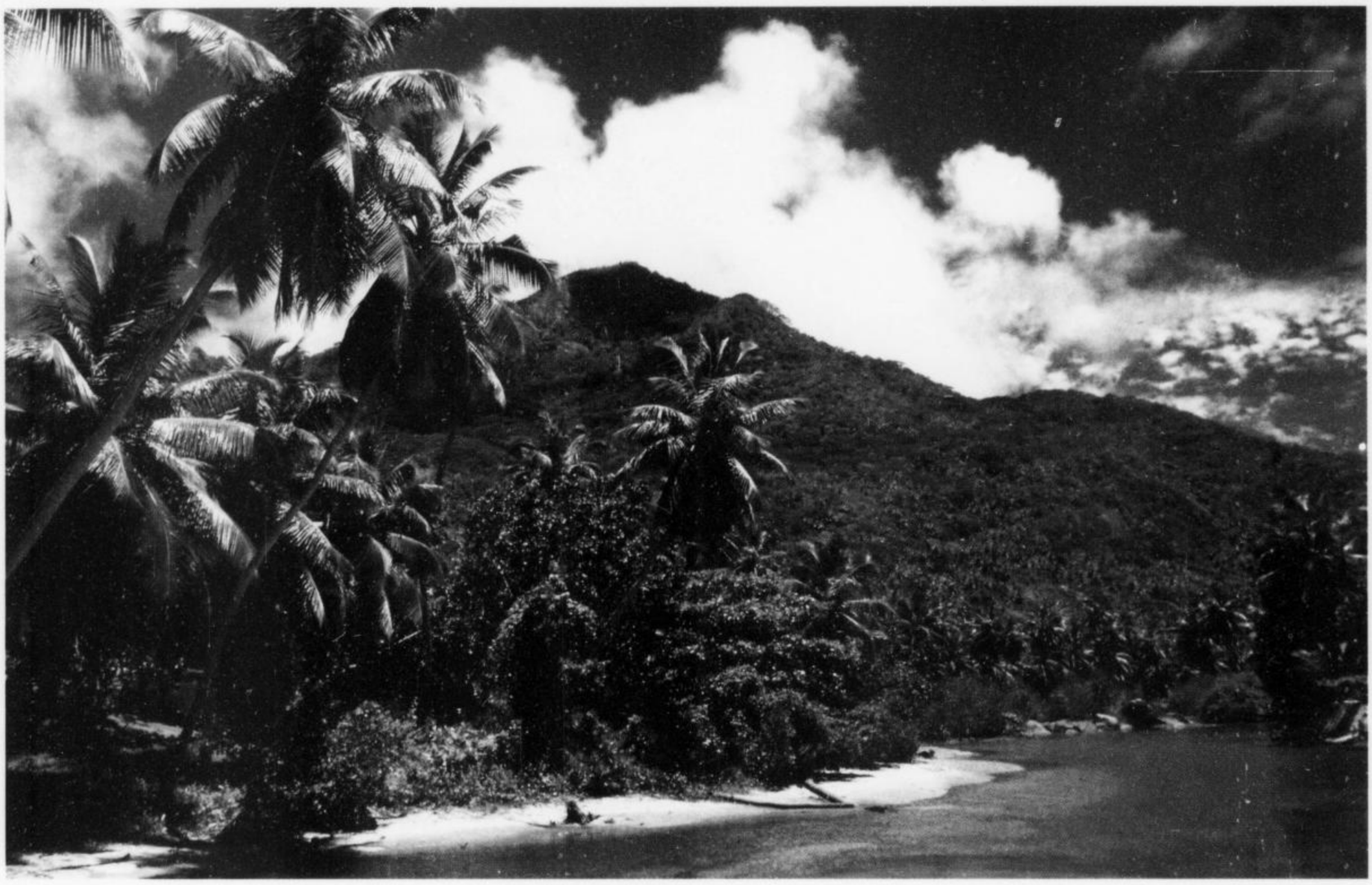
When ripe, the fruit gives off a pungent odour. Generally speaking, only three or four fruits ripen on each inflorescence, though as many as ten have been known to reach maturity, and in such cases the bunch of fruits may weigh as much as 200 kg. The trees produce only one or two bunches a year.

Another remarkable feature of these trees is their extremely slow rate of growth and, linked with that, their longevity. They take three years to germinate and, after they fruit the first time, it takes twenty-five years before they start to bear fruit again and getting on for a thousand years before they reach their full size—the oldest coco-de-mer in the Vallée de Mai are reckoned to be over 800 years old.

Why do they occur only in the Seychelles? One theory is that when the original continent of which the Seychelles are thought to represent the remains broke up and disappeared in the course of aeons of geological time, many plant species also disappeared because they could not adapt to their new habitats, whilst others, like the coco-de-mer, lived on in isolation on certain small islands. In the case of the coco-de-mer, this isolation was to prove final, since there were three factors standing in the way of its natural dispersal. In the first place, its nut is too heavy, when still fresh and thus capable of germinating, for sea-borne dispersal. Secondly, since the species is dioecious the male and female palms have to grow side by side for reproduction to take place. Lastly, the species is also gregarious, fruiting and reproducing well only within a community.

THE REMAINS OF EDEN

It was in 1768, in the course of the Marion-Dufresne expedition that had sailed from the Ile de France (now Mauritius) to reconnoitre the Seychelles, that the coco-de-



mer was discovered on Praslin Island. Its existence had, however, been suspected and it gave rise to all kinds of legends that long haunted the imagination of those who dwelt on the shores of the Indian Ocean and of the early European navigators; it is in fact to one of these legends, according to which it grew underwater, that it owes its name of "sea coconut". Its nuts were much sought after for their aphrodisiac properties, and its shell was reputed to be an excellent antidote.

It was, however, the Englishman Charles Gordon—General Gordon of Khartoum—who was the author of the wildest, and hence the most amusing, theory. In a still unpublished study, dated 1881, the year of his visit of inspection to the Seychelles, and entitled *Eden and its two sacramental trees*, Gordon claimed that these islands were the remains of the earthly paradise and that the coco-de-mer was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He seems to have been struck not only by the extraordinarily suggestive shape of the nut but also by the fact that it was contained within a heart-shaped fruit—the heart of man being, according to the Scriptures, the seat of his carnal desires. To explain how Eve could have tasted of a fruit with such a hard shell and so indigestible a nut, Gordon added that the coco-de-mer might have been different in times gone by and might have lost its mystical properties by reverting to what he called its natural state.

The Vallée (formerly Val) de Mai, so called because its original owner acquired it during the month of May, remained intact until the 1930s, after which, for fifteen years or so, plantations were laid out there. In 1945, the Seychelles authorities bought the land and cleared it of dead wood to prevent forest fires, causing soil erosion. From the 1950s onwards, a sustained effort was made to restore the site. In view of its great ecological interest, it was declared a nature reserve in 1966, became a National Park in 1979, and in 1983 was selected as a World Heritage Site.

As in the case of the Aldabra atoll, another World Heritage Site in the archipelago, administration of the Vallée de Mai Nature Reserve was entrusted in 1989 to the Seychelles Islands Foundation, a non-governmental organization on which are represented such major international scientific bodies as the Royal Society (London), the Smithsonian Institution (Washington, D.C.) and the Paris-based research organization ORSTOM. By the support it gives to the Foundation, UNESCO makes a major contribution to the maintenance and preservation of the two sites. ■

Below, a group of Seychelles fodies (*Foudiae seychellenses*), a bird species endemic to the Seychelles. Bottom photo, a cluster of coco de mer nuts.

GUY LIONNET,
of Mauritius, is technical advisor on environmental issues and honorary president of the Seychelles Islands Foundation. He is the author of *Par les chemins de la mer: périples aux Seychelles au temps des voyages aux longs cours*, which will be published shortly by CRI publishers, Réunion.

Le Corbusier (Charles Edouard Jeanneret-Gris; 1887-1965).

Le Corbusier
Art and the home

After giving his views on the architectural perfection of Venice (see the* UNESCO Courier, *March, 1994), Le Corbusier invited modern society to devote its art and industry to the service of town planning, starting with the home.

I believe that a town consists primarily of dwellings; the temples and the palaces come afterwards. Now that we have set our subjects of concern in perspective, you will at once realize why modern society, in the mass, is not in the least concerned about creating for itself an art that assuages its highest desires. The very basis on which society rests is missing—homes. Housing in the world's cities is awful. It has been sacrificed on the altar of profit, and the only thing that has so far supplanted money has been the violent crisis that we are now experiencing and that may perhaps show us what a vain thing money is and how pointless it is to go too far in its pursuit. What is required is to point human consciousness in the right direction, so that our hearts and minds may aim for true, real, tangible goals, accessible by our own efforts rather than, as at present, by savagery, cruelty and reckless greed.

I have taken part in a series of ventures—all of them, needless to say, unsuccessful—in the field of urban development in major capitals such as Stockholm, Antwerp, Moscow, Paris, Buenos Aires and Algiers, and all I can say is that those cities are at present in a state of unconsciousness, of ignorance of what I claim modern civilization has to offer them. They need to be shaken out of their torpor, their abdication of responsibility. Since it is a good idea in all matters to have a clear terminology, I came up with a maxim. I said that "a city is a collective endeavour that should provide each individual with the *essential joys*." These "essential joys" are easy to describe.

I "said my piece" long ago; I waded into the muddled debate over styles, fashions and snobbery, with the sledge-hammer argument that *"la maison est une machine à habiter"*—houses are machines for living in. I have been threatened a thousand times with a beating for saying that. When I say "for living in" I do not mean just that the occupants' material needs should be satisfied. I top the expression out by adding "and for meditating in after the most pressing needs have been met". But for a home to become a place of meditation it must take on an entirely new form. To be at all attainable, this in turn requires an overall composition for the town, the redesigning of its paths of communication, boldness in the creation of its visual spaces, a new way of building homes, and sound design for even the least of household objects. As to the design of these smallest household objects—and here I refer back to Venice, and the gondola in particular—I would like our modern ingenuity to snatch the task out of the hands of "professionals" who are not up to it, and turn these minor things into magnificent machines that are as efficient as those built by engineers but, being subject to the discipline of meeting our spiritual needs, embody proportion—divine proportion—to the same degree as certain well-known examples of work hitherto done more or less by hand. I cannot accept debasement of either—neither of the hand nor of the machine; there is no reason why the faultless exactitude of the machine should be inimical to beauty.

It is not widely enough realized that modern architecture, immensely important as it is in the construction of a machine-age society, finds its way into every occurrence of life, even into a speech or a book. That same unity can prevail in all objects, and will one day prevail, provided that, at some point, the spiritual

Text selected and presented by Edgardo Canton

currents are strong enough to indicate a line of conduct and make the unanimity apparent.

In conclusion, I would say that art itself is at the very basis of the great metamorphosis that is already under way. If we go on, in defiance of any logic, applying the old architectural formulae we no longer need today—thick walls and so on—we shall be unable to tackle the problem of cities today. The problem is to create "interiors" that will bring back serenity and quiet; to eliminate noise; to flood them with sunlight (modern technology has done away with stone façades with holes punched through them and replaced them by glass walls, making it perfectly feasible, technically and economically, in modern buildings to open apartments on to skyscapes and green landscapes); to arrange the accommodation and the objects—the interior spaces, fixtures and fittings—in such a way as to make the maintenance simple, the functions efficient and the life lived there a life filled with tenderness; and lastly, whilst achieving this harmonious combination of aims, to keep prices down to a level that is compatible with modern economic conditions, a level it would be madness to think of exceeding. The world has never been rich and building must be, as it has always been, economical—only the nineteenth century indulged in extravagant spending for the benefit of a few, to build homes that were merely appliances for bringing happiness. When large-scale industry, which has subsided into turning out countless futile consumer goods, finds its rightful path again and produces goods intended for fertile consumption, for the home, and at last turns its attention to building, doing in the factory all the marvellous things that can be done—only then will the result be achieved. Let me illustrate these assertions with a striking example, that of the car, which arouses general admiration because it is well made and relatively cheap. For ages I have been wearing myself out making the point that if only we could bridge the gap between that miracle, the car, and our housing—its planning and design, its fixtures and fittings—we could provide modern society with admirable accommodation that would be, in artistic terms, as beautiful, as clear-cut and as capable of arousing emotion as the car or the aircraft.

What we need today are people with enough faith and enough strength of character to persevere in drawing up—even in the nothingness of this world killed stone dead by money—the plans required in every domain. One day those plans will be the common heritage of all. Just look at my own domain of construction: one per cent of my workmen already take an interest in the question, and that's not bad. When those plans are sufficiently vast and pure for it to be possible to see in them that unity towards which we are heading, the workman will understand that what goes on in the factory relates to his own home. When, for instance, the first group of three or four thousand homes is erected somewhere using the same machines as he uses today to build cars for the rich, he will realize that society has new aims in sight. That common faculty will then come into operation—that long-forgotten seed—love, the love that goes into all human endeavours. That is where art will manifest itself, where art will burst forth. I see no other way of motivating art than through the way in which work, any work, is undertaken. Then we shall no longer be searching about, at earnest meetings like this one, for ways to attract ordinary people to the higher expressions of music and the fine arts—cubism, futurism, expressionism, constructivism and so on, and all the "isms" yet to be. Firmly grounded upon enthusiastic participation in the common pursuit, the many and varied tiers of artistic expression will rise up serene and bright. For my own part, I believe in the so-called "higher" arts, which I believe are not for everyone; but it is heartrending for me to look at today's dismal spectacle of the whole mass of people indifferent or even hostile to what they are doing. I believe in an imminent upturn, an age of harmony close at hand.

Greece shows us an example of such harmony, the Middle Ages too; and Venice sets one before our very eyes. ■

CZIFFRA: a legacy of freedom

GYORGY Cziffra, who died on 15 January 1994, left his native Hungary in 1956 and made his home in France. A fabulous pianist who immediately won extraordinary acclaim, a prodigious virtuoso who summoned up a shimmering tone from the instrument in joyous communion with the music, he appeared to audiences around the world as a magician of unheard-of talent. His effect upon them was reminiscent of that produced, more than a century before, by the likes of Paganini or Liszt. Cziffra was indeed so steeped, throughout his life, in the music of the latter as to become the very incarnation of Liszt.

Critics, however, soon began to look disparagingly upon him, in the name of "good taste", as being too far outside the stylistic mainstream of the times. I studied the piano in the 1960s, and I well remember the disdain in my teacher's voice when he came out with one of his favourite criticisms: "Oh no! Not like Cziffra!" (Strangely enough, the popular French singer-composer Georges Brassens and György Cziffra were in his eyes guilty of the same sins, a pairing that was not to the discredit of either of them). It is true that the musical establishment cold-shouldered him. How did he take it, he who had done so much for musicians?

This "good taste", not unalloyed with intolerance, affected me for a while. I was taught that the flashes of inspiration and thrills of delight conjured up by those fingers of his were too spontaneous to merit approval. He had been my god, but I had to abjure that religion. Is it any excuse to say I was young at the time?

It was only later that I learned about his life, a life of hardships and ordeals, willpower and passion that may tomorrow have passed into legend. It is perhaps because of the way his playing radiates energy and tenderness that it now has the power to move me again. Whatever the Pharisees may think, romanticism needs warm-heartedness in order to blossom; academicism stifles it. Such music is a freely offered gift: are we capable of hearing the song of one who transfigures it?

Freedom in Cziffra's case meant never giving in to any dogma, be it political or artistic. In leaving us he bequeaths that freedom to us, for which we give thanks.

STANY KOL ■
UNESCO staff member

ANNIVERSARY

ULUGH BEG, THE ASTRONOMER-KING

by Jasmina Šopova

FROM his birth in Soltaniyeh in 1394 to his death in Samarkand in 1449, the life story of Mahmud Turgay was one of wisdom and of enthusiasm. A sagacious ruler who has gone down in history by the name bestowed on him of Ulugh Beg, the "great prince", he is also known as the celebrated scholar Guragon. Governor of parts of Khorasan and Mazandaran from 1407 onwards, he ascended the throne of the Timurids only towards the end of his life, in 1447.

Grandson of the famous Mongol conqueror Timur, the founder of the Timurid dynasty whose empire stretched from the Mediterranean to Mongolia, and son of Shah Rokh, a ruler famed for his peaceable nature and his interest in the arts, Ulugh Beg also made his contribution to the intellectual life of Samarkand and became one of the leading makers of the Timurid Renaissance. He enhanced the splendour and prosperity of Samarkand, building a magnificent *madrasah* or religious school, entirely overlaid with ceramics, a convent, a caravanserai, the Alike Kukeltash great mosque, and a small mosque of such exquisite workmanship that it was known as the "carved mosque". The *madrasah* played a decisive part in the progress of astronomy, Ulugh Beg's preferred field of study, providing the point of departure for another colossal undertaking that the "great prince" had in mind since childhood. Fascinated by the thirteenth-century Maraghah observatory, he gave orders, soon after the opening of the *madrasah*, in about 1424, for his architects to build an observatory that would be without equal anywhere in the world. This was how the Samarkand observatory, which for 300 years was likewise to inspire astronomers and architects, came into being.

It was erected on a rocky hill some twenty metres high, set in a handsome park and with living quarters around it. The main building consisted of a long tunnel, three storeys high, leading from the entrance and plunging below ground before curving back skywards, thus forming a giant sextant, the largest astronomical instrument of its kind in the world, with a forty-metre radius. The purpose in constructing it on such an imposing scale was to enable more accurate observations to be made of the transit of the moon and the planets through the solar meridian. Equipped with an astrolabe and an armillary sphere, its primary function was to obtain precise measurements of the length of the year and of such important astronomical data as the angle between the trajectory of the sun and the celestial equator.

The main scientific findings to come out of these observations are to be found in the set of astronomical tables known as the *Zij-i Gurgani*, written in Persian, Arabic and Turkish. Although they were probably completed by about 1437, Ulugh Beg kept making modifications to them right until his death. Ulugh Beg must share some of the credit for their accuracy, often compared to that of modern tables, with his first astronomer royal, Ghiyath al-Din al-Kashi, who was held in the highest esteem by his master.

Among the documents left by Ghiyath al-Din to posterity, one that deserves particular attention is a letter addressed to his father in which he describes the work of the observatory in minute detail and also sketches a portrait in words of Ulugh Beg. Carefully pointing out that what he was writing was not a gesture of deference—the ruler could not stand flatterers—but the strict truth, he tells us that the "King of Islam" was already an accomplished scholar by the age of twenty-five, always avidly in search of knowledge. A man of immense erudition, he knew nearly all of the Qur'an by heart and had a talent for quoting aptly from it. He wrote Arabic very well and expressed himself with great eloquence, rhetoric being among his favourite exercises. He regularly attended the *madrasah*, often surprising his listeners by his apposite comments and his speed in mental arithmetic. He also had an exceptional memory, as the following anecdote shows. As befits a ruler, he was an enthusiastic huntsman, and as befits a scholar he kept a detailed record in his notebook of what birds had been shot, when and where. . . . When one day the librarian despondently announced that the notebook had disappeared, Ulugh Beg cheered him up by saying he knew it all by heart, and proceeded to dictate it all from memory to his assistant, who took it down in a new notebook. When later the original turned up, the two texts were compared and were found to differ in only four or five particulars.

Forever gazing at the stars, Ulugh Beg also wished to tell his future from them, but the stars that had looked down benevolently upon the scholar reserved a cruel fate for the man. It is said that a great rift occurred between him and his son Abd al-Latif over the interpretation of their respective horoscopes, and things came to such a pass that the son finally, so it is said, killed his father.

Thus it was that Samarkand came to lose one whose image has gone down in history as that of a simple, modest man, a respected ruler, an eminent scholar, a poet, historian and patron of the arts to whose court the greatest minds of the time flocked. Despite his early death, the scale of his achievement was such that it became known far beyond the frontiers of the Islamic world and its influence on astronomy extended into Europe. ■

The gigantic sextant of Ulugh Beg's observatory, Samarkand. Tunnelled right through the rock and with a 40-metre radius, it was the largest astronomical instrument of its time.

JASMINA SOPOVA
is a Macedonian essayist who has written widely on the art and literature of black Africa, the Indian Ocean and the West Indies.

BOOKS OF THE WORLD

ONE GIRL'S WAR

Zlata and Mimmy confide in each other nearly every day. In the secrecy of their little bedroom that looks out on the hills of Sarajevo, a room full of books, records and all those little treasures they never like to be parted from—including one or two cuddly toys to remind them they are still children—they tell each other about the ordinary happenings of their daily life. Or, to be precise, Zlata talks while Mimmy "listens".

The story begins in September 1991. Zlata Filipovic is eleven. The holidays are over and it's back to the old routine of school, music lessons, friends' birthday parties, outings to the cinema, pancakes at granny's house, skiing trips, satellite television, and the still unfulfilled dream of getting Michael Jackson to send his autograph. Zlata has an old desk diary where she notes down anything that takes her fancy during the day. Sometimes she sticks in an amusing picture or adds a drawing, and her sentences are frequently punctuated by exclamations—sometimes in English—of "Super!", "YO, BABY, YO!", "Tralalalala!", "I AM HAPPY", "Yoopee" and the like. Mimmy has not yet been given a name: she is a silent confidante, just an ordinary diary, occasionally rewarded with a "ciao" or a "night-night".

One day Zlata finds daddy in uniform and mummy in tears. She is shattered to learn that her father, a lawyer, has been ordered to report to his police reservist unit. It's something they have to adjust to, it's only for a while anyway, but a nagging doubt—combined with fear—creeps into their family life. Zlata knows nothing and cares nothing about politics, but she begins to wonder about what is happening in Slovenia and then in Croatia: will Bosnia-Herzegovina be next? She is worried for her parents' friend who lives in Dubrovnik, and she shares their anxiety when the telephone lines are cut. . . .

After a month's silence, from 4 February to 5 March 1992, Zlata's entries start again: "My God! There's been trouble in Sarajevo. On Sunday (1 March), a small group of armed civilians (according to the TV) killed one of the guests at a wedding and wounded a priest. On Monday (2 March), there were barricades all over town. There must have been a thousand of them! We ran out of bread." At this point the nightmare begins. There are no more "Yoopees" but "I'm frightened of WAR!", "MURDERERS!", "I'm sad Mimmy", "It's HORRIFIC', "I NEED PEACE!". Spring, summer and autumn go by and a new year, 1993, begins. "The war's still going on, you know". But sometimes the electricity comes back on and it is possible to heat the apartment, to cook and watch television, and sometimes there is water as well, so things are all right: "It doesn't take much to make people in Sarajevo happy."

Tuesday, 2 June 1993: "First water and electricity and now gas. We are on the verge of suicide. It's a DISASTER. Mimmy, I can't stand it any more. I'm fed up of everything. I'm tired to death of all these b... . I apologize for swearing, but I can't stand it any more. I've really had enough. I feel more and more like killing myself if those cretins up there or down here don't kill me first. I've had all! I can take. I WANT TO SCREAM, TO SMASH EVERYTHING, TO KILL SOMEONE. I'm only human, I can only take so much. I'm suffering terribly! I SHALL BE IN A BETTER MOOD NEXT TIME." Despite the increasingly frequent bouts of despair, the will to live finally gets the better of the distress. "I am still alive and healthy, my parents are alive and healthy. . . . So here we go, ON WE GO. But who knows for how much longer?" A presentiment of dread seeps insidiously into Zlata's life: "I have a feeling that there will be nothing left here, not a living soul."

After more than a year of bombardments, of cold, hunger and sickness, of friends who have left and friends who have died, nothing is as it was before. The kitchen is the only room still in use. Zlata's bedroom is an ideal target for the gunners hiding up in the hills, and the room where they keep the piano is just as dangerous. At night they spread mattresses on the floor to stay out of the way of bullets flying in through the windows. They sleep in the kitchen because it's freezing everywhere else. Water is a precious commodity when it has to be fetched from the standpipe or collected when it rains; they drink it a mouthful at a time and wash in a few drops, all in the kitchen. Then there is the cellar: how can they ever forget the long hours spent crouching there in the dark and cold, with the infernal din of the bombardments in their ears?

When they do emerge, it is into a scene of total destruction. Day by day, as the city is gradually wiped out, the children of Sarajevo see their childhood disappearing. The old post office, the maternity home, the Olympic village . . . the age of innocence goes up in smoke.

Life goes on, but interspersed with deaths, and funerals take the place of festivities. People go on falling in love, marrying and remembering one another's birthdays, but neither the celebrations nor the presents are like they used to be: people give "German" cabbages—German because they were bought with marks on the black market—or "great big kisses" because they have nothing else to give.

Zlata is a big girl now. The war is ruthless. Pedigree dogs are abandoned to become strays, birdcages are emptied of their occupants, trees are burned to ashes, and children grow up before their time. Zlata now has other worries and other wishes: to go to school a little more often, to get a little more than a hundred grams of bread a day, not to suffer the same fate as Anne Frank. Her entries are different: "Tuesday, 21 September 1993: Dear Mimmy, the historic match WAR vs PEACE has been postponed. That means PEACE has lost again." Mimmy has grown up too.

Word gradually got about that Zlata was keeping a diary, and it was passed around in Sarajevo before leaving town—a press photographer, Alexandra, one day took a copy to Paris. It is being published all over the world, so that people can hear, in seventeen different languages, its fearsome message: "War has taken hold of us and will not let us go". **J.S.** ■

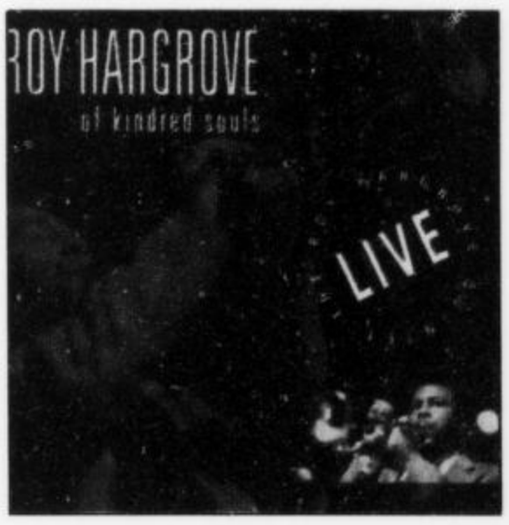
***Zlata's Diary: a child's life in Sarajevo* is being published in English by Viking Penguin/Penguin Books. The passages quoted here were translated from the French edition, *Le Journal de Zlata*, published by Robert Laffont-Fixot, Paris.**

JAZZ

Mulgrew Miller. *Hand in Hand*
CD RCA 01241 63153 2
Miller (piano), Eddie Henderson (trumpet, flugelhorn), Kenny Garrett (alto and soprano sax), Joe Henderson (tenor sax), Steve Nelson (vibraphone), Christian McBride (bass), Lewis Nash (drums)

Mulgrew Miller is not only a talented pianist and a warm-hearted human being but also a top-class composer, as may be judged from the marvellous pieces on this recording, which will provide listeners with a source of endless pleasure. He is a consummate harmonist, whose orchestral ideas are drawn in part from the piano tradition of Memphis, Tennessee, where he lived for a while (and where one of his mentors, Phineas Newborn, also hailed from), and in particular from Oscar Peterson and McCoy Tyner. His bass-hand playing is intelligent and his phrasing surprises. Steve Nelson, one of New York's most talented vibes players, weaves a subtle counterpoint. Eddie Henderson, a wily instrumentalist with a keen ear, not as well known to the general public as he should be, provides the right tie-in between Kenny Garrett, eloquent and incisive, and Joe Henderson, lyrical and warm.

Roy Hargrove. *Of Kindred Souls*
CD RCA 01241 63154 2
Hargrove (trumpet, flugelhorn), Marc Cary (piano), Gregory Hutchinson (drums), Rodney Whitaker (bass), Ron Blake (tenor and soprano sax). Guest artists: Gary Bartz (alto



RECENT RECORDINGS

by Isabelle Leymarie

sax), André Hayward (trombone)

Hargrove is a trumpeter accomplished beyond his years, with a deep tone and a fertile imagination. Gary Bartz, a leading figure on the jazz scene in the 1970s, re-emerges in fine form on this compact after a while in the wings. Marc Cary, a young, inspired pianist who has a great future ahead of him, provides an incisive chordal backing. This is music straight from the heart, played by musicians striving for authenticity, unlike so many performers of the previous decade whose only concern was for commercial success.

Horace Silver. *It's Got To Be Funk*
CD Columbia 473877 2
Silver (piano), Oscar Brashear (trumpet and flugelhorn), Bob Summers, Ron Stout (French horn), Suzette Moriarty (trombone), Bob McChesney (bass trombone), Bob Maize (bass), Carl Burnett (drums). Guest soloists: Red Holloway (alto and tenor sax), Eddie Harris (tenor sax), Branford Marsalis (tenor sax), Andy Bey (vocals)

Funky this record most assuredly is. With the passing years, the genial pianist from Cape Verde has lost none of his sparkle and sense of economy, but his orchestrations have grown richer since the time of the Jazz Messengers and their mellowness here is due to the presence of several bass-register brasses. Silver swings uninhibitedly, leading his fellow players on, and has great fun with his titles, from "Funky Bunky" to a "Yo' Mama's Mambo" that is a mambo in name only. He gives us his inevitable "Song For My Father", with vocal by Andy Bey, and, with "The Lunceford Legacy" and "When You're In Love", shows what a master he is at the art, so often a thankless one in jazz, of the piano solo.

TRADITIONAL MUSIC

Kenya. *Musiques du Nyanza*
Double CD album, Ocora Radio France 560022/23

Ocora is to be congratulated for putting together this collection of the music, seldom recorded, of Kenya. These recordings are of the songs of the Lake Nyanza (ex-Lake Victoria) region, whose population includes the Luo, a people of herdsmen originating from the Sudan who speak a Nilotic language and have now taken up farming, and the Gusii and Kuria peoples, who are of Bantu origin and whose relations—not always harmonious—with the Luo are based on barter. The Luo accompany themselves with lyre-like instruments, rattles attached to their ankles and metal rings that keep the rhythm. Their music, steeped in the Sudanese tradition, is very different from that of the Gusii and Kuria, with its richer instrumentation of lyres, flutes, musical bows, whistles and percussion instruments.

Deep Forest
CD Sony Music COL 474178 2.

This disco/hip hop compact, orchestrated with rhythm box and synthesizer, is an entertaining collage of fragments of Baka songs from Cameroon, songs from Burundi and Senegal, and Pygmy songs originally collected by two musicologists, Hugo Zemp and Shima Aron. Purists may take umbrage, but these tracks lay no claim to be anything more than music to dance to. At the same time they are, indirectly, a tribute to the creativity of the singers of the African forests, anonymous masters of rhythm

and forerunners of hip hop, who have previously inspired several Western musicians, notably Herbie Hancock and Philip Glass.

Alfredo Rodriguez. *Para Yoya*
CD Bleu Caraïbes 82875-2

This is the fourth record by the Cuban pianist Alfredo Rodriguez, a leading figure on the New York salsa scene in the 1970s who now lives in Paris. Accompanied by Cuban, French and British musicians, he takes us on a musical tour through some varied countryside: guaguancó rumba tailing into salsa ("N'importe qui, n'importe quoi"), plain, straightforward piano-playing ("Maria y Maria"), a Yoruba chant ("Cante a Oggún"), a tribute, with traditional drums and lyrics partly in patois, to the queen ("Yoya") of one of the "Tumba francesa" societies (formed by people of Haitian origin living in eastern Cuba), a message of greetings to Africa against a background of batá drums ("Africa 93"), merengue ("Mariana"), and a lyrical instrumental piece by the late "Peruchin", the Cuban pianist, with the composer's son on guitar ("Te espero en el mar"). Those who like Caribbean music will find much to enjoy in this colourful medley.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Kathleen Battle. *Italian Opera Arias*
London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Bruno Campanella.
CD Deutsche Grammophon 435 866-2

Accompanied by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the pianist John Constable and the Ambrosian Opera Chorus, chorus master John McCarthy, the soprano Kathleen Battle sings arias by Bellini, Rossini and Donizetti. Her voice, at once full and restrained, preserves its richness in the high notes, rising in supple chromatic progression. Endowed with a profound musicality, she cultivates austerity, but an austerity charged with emotion. She has an admirable mastery of the art of rallentando, picking out the notes without ever "attacking" them. Though Rossini sometimes seems conventional, Bellini and Donizetti have an ethereal charm that is perfectly served by this superb diva's voice.

Barbara Hendricks. *La Voix du Ciel*
Double CD album. EMI Classics 7 54909 2

Backed by various orchestras, Barbara Hendricks here sings an eclectic range of vocal music, from the spirituals of which she is particularly fond and in the tradition of which she grew up, to the Schubert and Gounod versions of the "Ave Maria", by way of Villa-Lobos, Richard Strauss, Fauré, Schubert, Duparc and Ravel, not forgetting Lehar's "Merry Widow" and Loewe's "My Fair Lady". Her mellifluous voice, with its impressive vibrato, lends itself easily to these many changes of register, but to my mind it is the classical repertoire that suits her best and gives scope to her talent in all its majesty.

Palmarès de l'Année. Edition 1994. Scarlatti, Strauss, Janacek, Beethoven, Berlioz, Verdi, Britten, Mozart, Chopin et al.
Boxed set of 5 CDs. Deutsche Grammophon 439 988 2

A wide-ranging selection, made by various magazines and academies, of the year's best recordings. It includes such all-time favourites as "The Magic Flute", "Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune" and "Pictures at an exhibition" as well as lesser-known works such as Biber's Sonata for two violins, trombone and violone, Jeinichen's Concerto in F major, and Britten's "Four Sea Interludes". Bernstein, Boulez, Domingo, Von Karajan, Pavarotti, Pogorelic and Fischer-Dieskau rub shoulders with other great musicians in perfect harmony. Classical buffs will renew their acquaintance with some familiar pieces while the more adventurous can sample works that are less frequently on offer. ■

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INTELLECTUALS AND THE SCRAMBLE FOR PROFITS

I have been a subscriber to the *Courier* for ten years, and I have learned a great deal about the world from it. However, although last December's issue ("The meaning of progress: A North-South debate") gave several able intellectuals an opportunity to express their feelings, it was, to my mind, as restrained as ever in its attitude towards the basic cause of the violence, the crime and above all the poverty that afflict the countries of the South, namely the insensate scrambling for profits by the people in charge of those countries' economies.

No clear denunciation of this evil seems to me to emerge. Perhaps too many intellectuals fit comfortably into the system. Why not a real effort in your magazine to find a forward-looking economic and political viewpoint?

ANDRÉ PILET
AMFREVILLE-S/LES-MONTS (FRANCE)

THE WEST STILL BELIEVES IN PROGRESS

I have strong feelings about the article in your December 1993 issue by Régis Debray ("A Western myth"), which is as peremptory in tone as it is cleverly written. While I agree with some of the ideas expressed, some of the others made me think . . . and want to challenge them. At all events—and this may be taken as a compliment to the author—it was a thought-provoking piece, but one that, in my opinion, errs on the side of exaggeration and presumption.

I do not agree that the West has ceased to believe in progress and is increasingly backward-looking. I think such pessimism and scepticism merely reflect the confusion and impotence of an intelligentsia that unfortunately dominates the media and publishing.

In reality, I find that ordinary people still believe, and believe very strongly, in science and progress. Each of them hopes to receive better medical care and social benefits, to be better educated and informed, to be treated with greater consideration, to enjoy more freedom and to see his or her children obtain better positions though education.

I disagree with Régis Debray when he contrasts two time-schemes, the "cumulative time" of scientific and technological development and the "repetitive time" of the world of politics and symbols. This seems to me to state the case in too cut-and-dried a way. Could anyone deny that progress in science and technology, i.e. rational thought, has brought about a gradual evolution in moral, political and even religious ideas, in mentalities and mores? Examples I would quote are personal and political rights, freedom of thought and expression, women's rights, children's rights . . . even animal rights; and there is nothing to show that this movement is reversible—quite the contrary, as Michel Serres demonstrates in the interview at the beginning of this issue with his idea of the "natural contract".

Nor do I agree with the author when he asserts that "the noble advocates of progress" (why the sarcasm?) were wrong when "they predicted . . . the end of religious superstitions"—an assertion that is, to say the least, premature. Religious superstitions (not to be confused with genuine belief) have greatly declined in our societies based on rational progress: witchcraft and magic have given way as scientific medicine has advanced, and over the last century fewer and fewer of the "miracles" occurring at Lourdes have been accredited by the Church.

I do not agree with him either when he speaks of "each stage in the movement towards technological and economic unity reactivating ethnic and cultural diversity at a new level". This does not seem to be borne out in western Europe and North America, as the European Union and North American Free Trade Area show. On the contrary, where there is a deepening of ethnic, cultural and national differences it often occurs as a reaction to the frustration felt at not being able to take sufficient advantage of modern technical and economic progress.

I disagree with those who trace back the concept of progress to the "messianism" of Judaeo-Christian tradition without explaining why it took until the seventeenth century for that concept to emerge in societies that had, after all, been invoking that tradition for 1400 years! I believe it was, on the contrary, the weakening of religious messianism, under the impact of rationalism, that allowed the idea of gradual material and human progress to take root. The ideology of human progress, on the one hand, and religious tradition on the other, seem to me fundamentally incompatible.

BERNARD GOLDSTEIN
TULLE (FRANCE)

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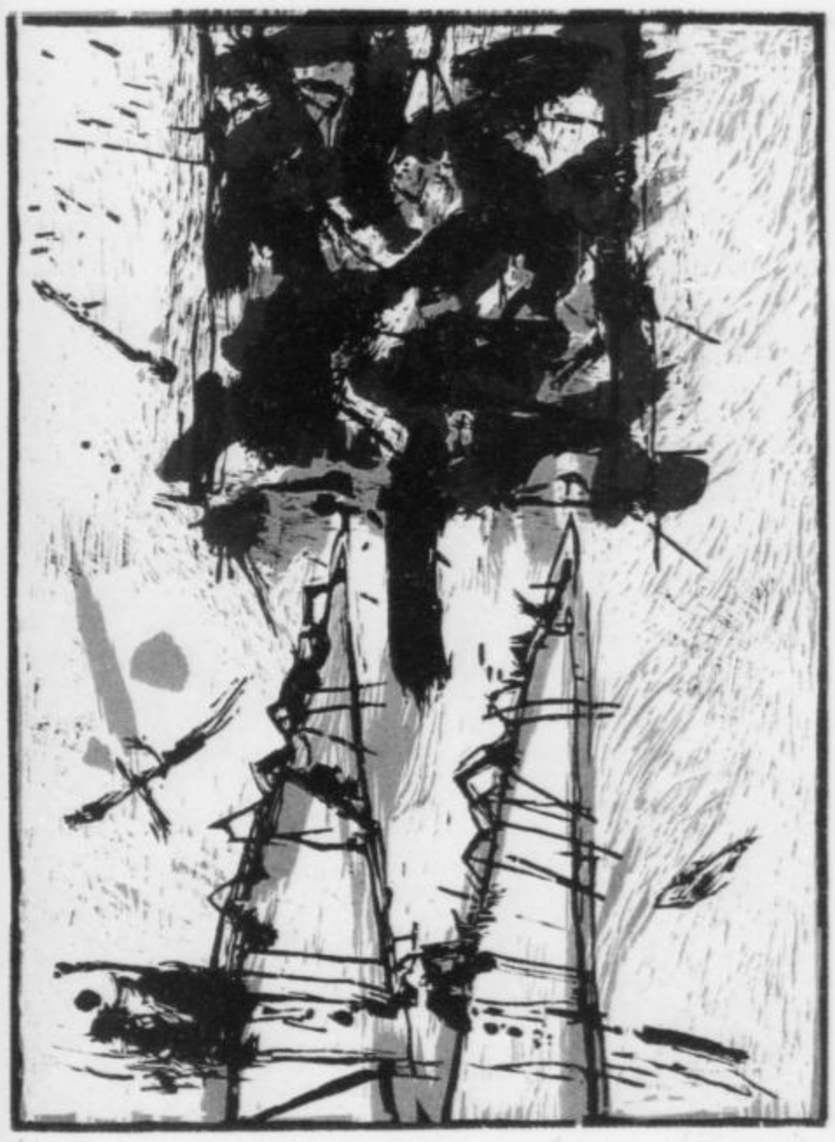
SEVENTEEN ENGRAVINGS FOR SARAJEVO

From 11 to 22 April 1994 an exhibition of seventeen wood engravings executed in 1993 by Sarajevo artists will be held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. Witnesses to the suffering caused by the destructive fury of men, the engravings also exemplify the power of art to resist barbarism.



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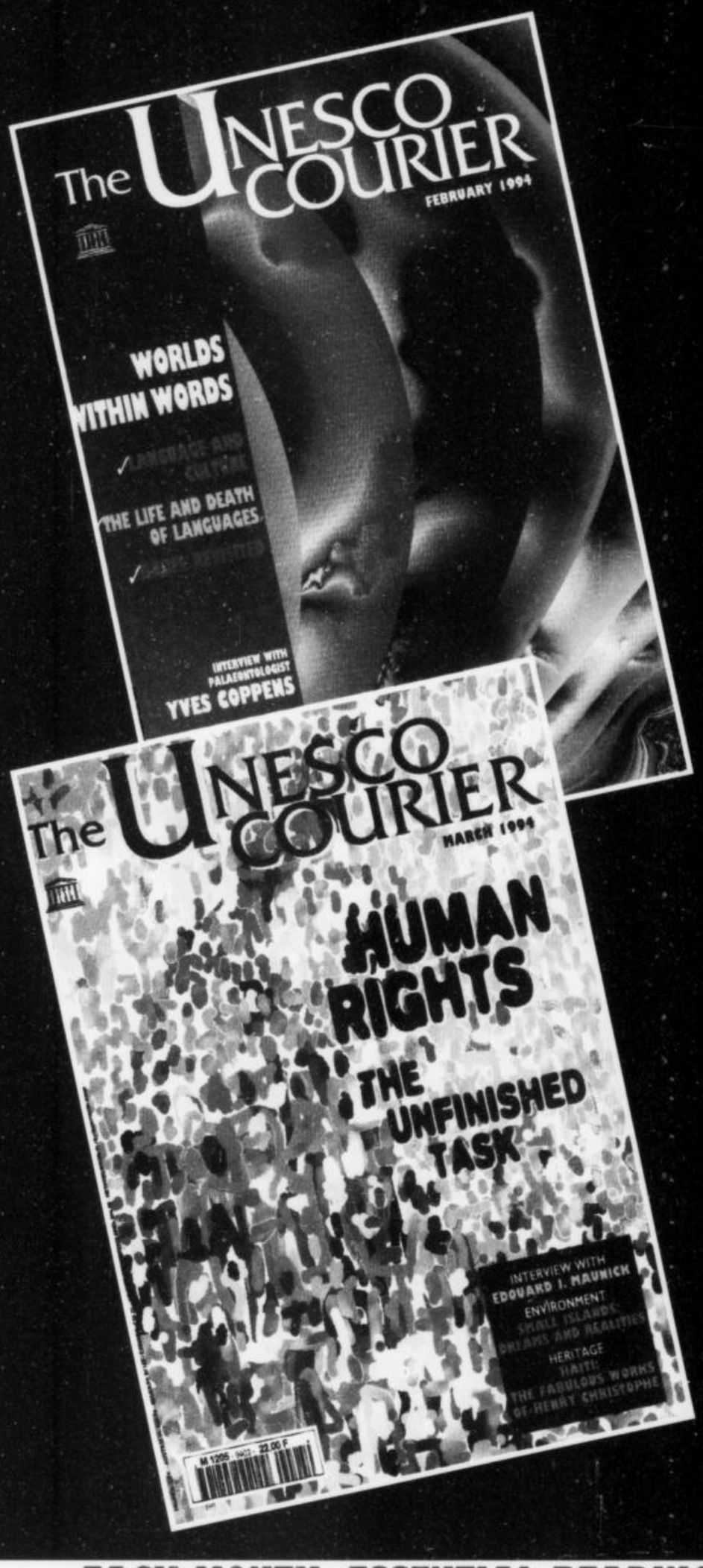

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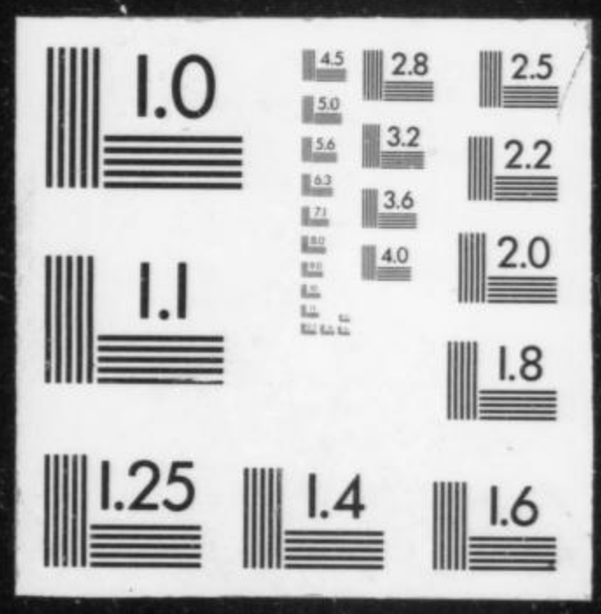
FRANÇOIS MITTERRAND... JORGE AMADO... RICHARD ATTENBOROUGH... JEAN-CLAUDE CARRIÈRE... JEAN LACOUTURE... FEDERICO MAYOR... NAGUIB MAHFOUZ... SEMBENE OUSMANE... ANDREI VOZNESENSKY... FREDERIC ROSSIF... HINNERK BRUHNS... CAMILO JOSÉ CELA... VACLAV HAVEL... SERGEI S. AVERINTSEV... ERNESTO SABATO... GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND... CLAUDE LEVI-STRAUSS... LEOPOLDO ZEA... PAULO FREIRE... DANIEL J. BOORSTIN... FRANÇOIS JACOB... MANU DIBANGO... FAROUK HOSNY... SADRUDDIN AGA KHAN... JORGE LAVELLI... LEON SCHWARTZENBERG... TAHAR BEN JELLOUN... GABRIEL GARCIA MÁRQUEZ... JACQUES-YVES COUSTEAU... MELINA MERCOURI... CARLOS FUENTES... JOSEPH KI-ZERBO... VANDANA SHIVA... WILLIAM STYRON... OSCAR NIEMEYER... MIKIS THEODORAKIS... ATAHUALPA YUPANQUI... HERVÉ BOURGES... ABDEL RAHMAN EL BACHA... SUSANA RINALDI... HUBERT REEVES... JOSÉ CARRERAS... A LETTER FROM FREUD TO EINSTEIN... LUC FERRY... CHARLES MALAMOUD... UMBERTO ECO... OLIVER STONE... ANDRÉ BRINK... JAMES D. WATSON... AMOS OZ... MICHEL SERRES... THÉODORE MONOD... YVES COPPENS... EDOUARD J. MAUNICK... JEAN MALAURIE...

THEME OF THE NEXT ISSUE (MAY 1994):

REWRITING THE HISTORY OF COMMUNISM

ALSO FEATURING AN INTERVIEW WITH ASTROPHYSICIST

TRINH XUAN THUAN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